

Medinz Update

INTERIM practical 'how to' information for N95/P2 respirator implementation in Primary Care

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The Ministry of Health are working to clarify their advice on when N95/P2 respirators may be used. In the interim, as per their communication of 28 February 2021, General Practice/Urgent Care Clinics/Community Testing Centres in Auckland are being issued supplies of N95/P2s for use for COVID-19 swabbing while Auckland is in AL3.

NRHCC has developed interim practical 'how to' information for N95/P2 use, now on HealthPathways; this advice is intended to answer the kind of questions primary care clinical leaders have received this week about the use of N95/P2 respirators in primary care. Note there has been more consultation since the Medinz of 28 February 2021 regarding eye protection; face shields can be worn with N95/P2 respirators as noted in the advice below.

[COVID-19 Information](#) > Local Guidance > Infection prevention and control > Northern Region DHBs:

When to use:

- Appropriate use of N95/P2 respirators is important, keeping in mind international supply issues. Ministry of Health are working to clarify their advice on when N95/P2 respirators may be used. In the interim, as per their communication of 28 February, General Practice/Urgent Care Clinics/Community Testing Centres in Auckland are being issued supplies of N95/P2s respirators for use for COVID-19 swabbing while Auckland is in AL3.
- The Ministry of Health guidance provides permission to wear an N95/P2, it is not a requirement. It states 'those that are undertaking swabbing can still be confident they are protected if they continue to use a visor and a Type IIR/Level 2 disposable medical mask'. It is important to remember that current PPE strategies and workplace practices have been very effective in protecting our primary care workforce throughout the pandemic thus far.

Importance of 'the basics'

- N95/P2s respirators do not replace the need for consistent, rigorous adherence to hand hygiene, distancing where possible and red/green streaming in general practice, covering coughs and sneezes, and improving ventilation where that is possible. If possible, swab outdoors; if indoors without effective ventilation, if possible, swab in a separate isolation/red streaming room, and open the windows.

Sessional Use:

- An N95/P2 respirator can be worn for sequential swabbing of multiple patients. The duration of wear of a respirator will be determined by user tolerability, integrity of seal and contamination of outer surface. Although technically an N95/P2 respirator can be worn for up to 8 hours, generally, after ~1 hour, if an N95/P2 respirator is properly fitted, people may feel uncomfortable in them. The N95/P2 respirator needs to be removed and disposed of when you are taking a break.

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- Other indications that a change in N95/P2 respirator is required include: if breathing becomes difficult; if the respirator becomes wet or moist, damaged; or obviously contaminated with body fluids such as respiratory secretions.
 - Do not re-use a N95/P2 respirator. Once it's removed it should be disposed of safely. Follow best practice for removal of PPE.
 - While sessional swabbing is preferred, if you aren't able to do this, then you need to don and doff PPE each time you do a swab, and not reuse the N95/P2 respirator.

Eye Protection

- For eye protection, face shields can be worn as long as the shield does not touch the N95 mask and disrupt the integrity of the seal (that will depend on the make of shield and respirator – e.g. some respirators protrude out from the face more). Face shields can help protect the mask from contamination and prevent you from self-contaminating your eyes with your hands. It is this self-contamination that facilitates entry of the virus via the conjunctiva not via small particles landing on the conjunctiva.
- The alternative, sealed goggles, may touch the N95/N2 respirator and disrupt the seal of one or the other. However, some people may prefer them to face shields. General practices are being supplied with both goggles and face shields and people can choose which they wear.

Other tips for safe usage

- Avoid handling an N95/P2 respirator by its exterior surface; handle by the elastic and edges of the mask as much as possible. Perform frequent hand hygiene, particularly before and after handling the mask
- Beards and facial hair, including stubble, are an issue with the fit of a N95/P2 respirators as you can't get an adequate seal (hair must not cross the sealing surface). Also, if people's weight changes significantly that can affect the fit of their N95/P2 respirator; that is why annual fit testing is recommended.
- Double masking with medical masks is not a substitute for an N95/P2 respirator and is not recommended.

COVID Update

Information from the Middle Eastern, Latin American and African (MELAA) team - as at 28 February

- **Important COVID-19 reminders**- available in English, Arabic, Bengali, Punjabi, Tagalog, Tamil, Urdu, Vietnamese, Swahili and Somali (more languages to come) – see attachment (1). If you need printed copies please email priscilla@aucklandpho.co.nz
- The Ministry of Health is regularly updating the **list of locations of interest** ([here](#)) - please **only get tested if you have visited a location of interest at the times stated**
- Updated details about COVID-19 **Community Testing Centres (CTC)** are available at www.arphs.health.nz/covid19test
- Fact sheet - Information for people with COVID-19 **going into managed isolation facility (MIF)** - available in English, Arabic, Simplified Chinese, Traditional Chinese, Hindi and Vietnamese. See under translated resources [here](#)

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- Fact sheet - Information for people going from **home to Jet Park**- available in English, Arabic, Simplified Chinese, Traditional Chinese, Hindi and Vietnamese. See under translated resources [here](#)
 - Work and Income: **Help with essential costs** (Work and Income may be able to help you even if you are working). Information in English, Hindi, Punjabi, Simplified Chinese and Vietnamese – see attachment (2) or see [here](#)

Lab Information

Please [follow link](#) to view Labtests latest Laboratory Update.

topics covered in this update:

- Request forms for COVID-19 swabs
- Delivering COVID-19 swabs direct to laboratory
- INR test results
- Updates to clinical information

Other Clinical Updates

We have been advised by the NRHCC team that there have been a number of complaints from patients who did not receive a text message for their COVID-19 swab result. In the event a patient complains that they have not received theirs within the timeframe they were told, email suzie@aucklandpho.co.nz with their Full Name, NHI, Date and the Test Site where the swab was taken. Please send in a password protected document for investigation.

PPE Logistics

As per the MEDINZ message Sunday 28 February 2021, the MoH via Onelink sent push orders of N95/P2 masks and googles to all practices registered as swabbing practices with Onelink. Practices do not need to access the PPE portal to receive the initial order. Further clarification on ordering additional supply will be provided. **For those practices that have not yet received their supply of N95/P2 masks please email suzie@aucklandpho.co.nz**

COVID-19 Vaccinations

Thank you to the Practice staff who responded so quickly and eagerly to the COVID-19 Vaccination call out from us. Most were chosen in the first tranche based on their age and any chronic condition. Everyone reported that the actual vaccination process was a positive experience.

Primary Care staff are called when there is an excess of thawed vaccine that may go to waste after the nominated period, hence the short notice call up.

We will call you if/when further vaccines are available. We usually get one – three hours' notice! Please do not front up to a Vaccination Centre, unless you have been provided with an invite letter from Auckland PHO on the date stated.