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Which mask should I use as the pandemic worsens?

Surgical Masks

Disposable surgical masks are composed of nonwoven, multilayered fabric. They are flat or pleated in appearance and are affixed with straps that go around the ear, head, or both. Surgical masks must undergo standardized tests to ensure that they offer adequate filtration, breathability, and protection against fluid penetration and flammability. Surgical masks are three times as effective as homemade masks at blocking microorganism transmission during coughing. A standard surgical mask will reduce the risk for COVID-19 infection by an estimated 65%, and the more form-fitting, the better. Care must be exercised during removal and disposal of these masks, as detectable levels of infectious virus have been shown to remain on the outside of surgical masks for up to 7 days.

Filtering Facepiece Respirators

The most effective mask is the filtering facepiece respirator, more commonly known as N95. N95 masks are tested and certified by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. I have found **3M Personal Protective Equipment Particulate Respirator 8210, N95, Smoke, Dust, Grinding, Sanding, Sawing, Sweeping, 20/Pack** from Amazon today.

Masks alone are not enough to stop the spread.

The experts all emphasized that mask use is just one tool that can slow the pandemic. Social distancing, ventilation and hand hygiene are also important. None of these is 100 percent effective by itself. But when we combine them, then we can make a big dent in the risk of transmission.

Shalom (tohi, salaam, salud),

--Patricia

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