

Reusable respirators may be a suitable alternative to disposable respirators

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Shortages of respiratory protective devices for healthcare personnel are major concerns during the COVID-19 pandemic. A team of researchers

at Baylor College of Medicine, Emory University, the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health Centers at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have found that reusable respirators may be a suitable alternative to disposable N95 respirators currently in high demand. The study appears in the journal *JAMA*.

"Training and fit testing healthcare providers on respirators can be time consuming, and in an epidemic we want to train and fit test a large number of workers quickly," said first and corresponding author Dr. Lisa A. Pompeii, professor of pediatrics—epidemiology at Baylor.

In this study, the researchers compared the time it takes to fit test and train healthcare personnel in the use of disposable respirators versus reusable elastomeric half-mask respirators that provide the same level of respiratory protection as N95 respirators. They found that [healthcare](#) personnel learned to use the reusable respirator quickly and that it took no more time to fit test them than it would take a disposable respirator.

"Our study shows that training and fit testing workers on these reusable respirators does not represent a barrier for possible use by hospitals," Pompeii said. "An advantage of reusable respirators is that there is no need to stockpile them."

More information: Lisa A. Pompeii et al, Training and Fit Testing of Health Care Personnel for Reusable Elastomeric Half-Mask Respirators Compared With Disposable N95 Respirators, *JAMA* (2020). [DOI: 10.1001/jama.2020.4806](https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2020.4806)

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