

Preventing PPE-related skin injuries

Frequently Asked Questions

Adequate fit and seal of filtering facepiece respirators (FFRs) such as P2/N95 respirators with the skin are required to provide expected and effective exposure reduction. The proper seal helps ensure that the majority of inhaled air will travel through the respirator's filter material. Anything that disrupts the fit and seal of the FFR will result in a reduction in the level of protection that the wearer can achieve with the FFR.

General tips for skin protection when wearing facial personal protective equipment (PPE) include choosing a skin protection product that:

- does not interfere with the seal of the respirator and/or fit of other facial PPE.
- does not transfer off your skin and onto the facial PPE
- protects skin from friction and moisture (waterproof)
- is breathable, so moisture can evaporate from your skin
- does not require removal or washing off
- has a low dermatitis potential
- Always read and follow all respirator user instructions, including conducting a user seal check every time the respirator is donned (put on)

Certain 3M skin health products that may help protect the skin and not interfere with the fit of the respirator include:

- 3M™ Cavilon™ No Sting Barrier Film

Certain 3M products, such as 3M™ Tegaderm™ Transparent Film Dressings, may be appropriate for use under respirators but as they protrude off the skin, the respirator should be fit tested using the film to ensure good fit.

Additionally, every time an FFR is donned, the wearer must conduct a user seal check. If a successful user seal check cannot be conducted, the wearer should not use the product with the respirator.

Other dressings, such as polyurethane foams and hydrocolloids, should not be used under the area where the FFR seals to the face as they are expected to interfere with the seal of the respirator and therefore the expected level of protection.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I use ointments (e.g. petroleum jelly) to protect my skin under a 3M filtering facepiece respirator (FFR), such as a P2/N95 respirator?

3M does not recommend the use of petroleum jelly (also known as petrolatum), ointments, or thick creams because of the potential for interference with the seal of any of 3M's FFR's, such as P2/N95 respirators. Petroleum jelly may cause the respirator to slip around on the face.

Can I use 3M™ Cavilon™ No Sting Barrier Film to protect my skin under a 3M filtering facepiece respirator (FFR), such as an P2/N95 respirator?*

Yes, 3M™ Cavilon™ No Sting Barrier Film will help protect intact skin from moisture and friction, and help protect damaged skin (e.g. abrasions from friction or other superficial skin damage) from further damage. When used properly, Cavilon No Sting Barrier Film would not be expected to interfere with the fit of 3M filtering facepiece respirators (FFR) such as P2/N95 respirators.

- The 1 mL wipe or 1 mL wand applicator should be used.
- The product should be applied to clean, dry skin over any area where the FFR is likely to cause friction and/or where moisture may collect, e.g. the bridge of the nose, cheeks, tops of ears, or forehead.
- It can be used on the face, but should not be used in the eye, or on the eyelid.
- The product should be allowed to dry completely (at least 90 seconds) before the FFR is donned (put on). This allows fluid to dry on the skin and vapours to dissipate.
 - Upon application, an odour may be noted as the solvent ingredient evaporates. The odour will disappear as the product dries.
- Always read and follow all respirator user instructions, including conducting a use seal check every time the respirator is donned (put on).
- We recommend starting with a once daily application. If the user experiences buildup of the product, decrease the frequency of application, e.g. 3 times/week.
- Cavilon No Sting Barrier Film does not require removal but can be removed with a medical grade adhesive remover.
- Every time an FFR is donned, the wearer must conduct a user seal check. If a successful user seal check cannot be conducted, the wearer should not use the product with the respirator.

If my skin is already damaged, can I use a dressing under 3M filtering facepiece respirators (FFR) such as an P2/N95 respirator?

3M does not recommend use of dressings such as polyurethane foams and hydrocolloids. These types of dressings can raise the respirator off the cheeks and nose and may interfere with the intended seal and exposure reduction associated with the respirator.

- If use of a dressing or bandage is desired, select the *thinnest* dressing available (e.g. 3M™ Tegaderm™ Transparent Film Dressing) AND perform fit testing, as well as a user seal check every time the respirator is donned (put on).
 - The U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires, “The fit test shall be performed while the test subject is wearing any applicable safety equipment that may be worn during actual respirator use which could interfere with respirator fit” (29 CFR § 1910.134 Appendix A). ISO 16975-3:2017 Part 3 also includes this requirement.
 - In Australia & New Zealand, the healthcare facility should be familiar with the local country, state and/or territory Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) legislative requirements as well the requirements in AS/NZS 1715:2009 Respiratory Protective Equipment - Selection Use and Maintenance.
- For those respirators with adjustable headbands, it is important to not over-tighten 3M filtering facepiece respirators (FFR) such as P2/N95 respirators as this can interfere with the seal against the skin and increase the risk of pressure-related skin damage

Note: Dressings or film barriers can be used to help prevent or cover areas of skin damage under equipment, such as face shields, where fit and seal is not critical to the function of the protective equipment.

*Please refer to the product inserts (Instructions for use) for 3M™ Cavilon™ No Sting Barrier Film for complete Indications and Instructions for Use, Contraindications, Precautions, and Warnings.

** Federal Law (U.S.A.) restricts the device to sale by or on the order of a health care professional



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