KN95 Mask Instructions

What is a KN95? KN95 masks reduce the amount of dust or virus particles a person breathes in by approximately 95%.

Why use a KN95 instead of a face mask? While many face masks help prevent the spread of the virus from the wearer to others, they provide limited protection to the wearer. A KN95 provides better protection for the wearer than face masks, while also reducing the spread of the virus from the wearer.

Will a KN95 protect me during an exposure to COVID-19? If you are exposed to COVID-19 while wearing a KN95, you are less likely to develop COVID-19. In addition, you will likely have less restrictive self-isolation or quarantine requirements than a person wearing a cloth or surgical mask.

How is a KN95 different from a N95? The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) does not consider a KN95 a negative pressure respirator since it has not been certified by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). Therefore, OSHA does not require a person be “fit tested” to wear a KN95. Since a person is not fit tested for a KN95, they should not use a KN95 in situations where a fit-tested N95 mask is required (for example in clinical areas or for certain medical procedures).

Why use a KN95 instead of a N95? The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that N95s are reserved for use by healthcare providers due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

What other actions should I take if I wear a KN95? Even if you wear a KN95, you should still:

- Get the COVID-19 vaccine if you have not already done so. The vaccine is the best way to protect yourself and your family, friends, classmates, and coworkers from COVID-19.
- Stay home if you are sick or have symptoms consistent with COVID-19, and call the UMB COVID-19 hotline at 1-800-701-9863.
- Practice social distancing when feasible.
- Wash your hands frequently for at least 20 seconds with soap and water.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.

Who should wear a KN95 at the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB)? The UMB Policy Requiring Use of Face Coverings outlines when a person is required to wear a face covering at UMB. The policy specifically requires or recommends a KN95 as follows:

- KN95s are the only permitted face covering for unvaccinated faculty, staff and students. As such, unvaccinated employees and students must wear a KN95 when required to wear a face covering under the UMB Policy Requiring Use of Face Coverings.
- KN95s are required for fully vaccinated students, faculty, and staff when participating in classroom or training activities.
- KN95s are strongly recommended for fully vaccinated students, faculty, and staff when participating in group activities when 6ft feet of physical distance cannot be maintained or when many people (more than 5) are present.
How do I properly use my KN95?

- If possible, wash or sanitize your hands immediately before and after putting your KN95 on and immediately before and after taking it off when planning to reuse it.
- Place the mask over your face, with the bottom below your chin and the nosepiece up.
- The straps of the mask go over each your ears.
- Adjust the metal nose clip using fingers from both hands to mold the metal to the shape of your nose.
- Adjust fit as necessary to reduce air flow around the mask.
- Significant facial hair (more then 3-days growth) adversely effects the ability of the KN95 to form a tight seal around your face and thus reduces the KN95’s effectiveness at protecting you from COVID-19. Therefore, parts of your face that come in contact with the KN95 should be free of significant facial hair.
- If you wear glasses and find fogging to be a nuisance, wash the lenses with soapy water and shake off the excess before putting on your mask (wipe off nose piece to minimize skin irritation).

How should I care for and store my KN95? Please do NOT attempt to wash your KN95. With proper care your KN95 should be reusable for an extended period of time.

To keep your KN95 clean between uses, store your mask in a safe location that other people cannot access and where it will not get wet or be subject to direct sunlight or excessive heat. A dry paper bag works well for storing your KN95.

When should I discard my KN95? You should replace your KN95 when it:

- Becomes soiled
- No longer covers the nose and mouth
- Has stretched out or damaged ties or straps
- Cannot stay on the face
- Has holes or tears in the fabric

A KN95 may be disposed of in the normal trash.