

Care of SoftSeal Masks

Respirators (N95 masks) and Filter masks trap particles by having a tortuous path through the non-woven material of the mask. As they trap particles, the pathways get smaller actually improving the filter efficiency. At some point, the pathways get so small it becomes hard to breathe through the mask. When that happens, the mask should be discarded. You can imagine workers in dusty environments may need to change their masks daily. If you are using one of these masks for protection against small or invisible particles you might inhale while outside, or in a building like a store, these masks will last for months until they fill up with particles making them hard to breathe through.

However, you should take proper care of yourself and the mask to extend its usefulness. Remember you can't see what is trapped on the outside of the mask. Therefore, any time you touch the outside of the mask, you might transfer what is on it to your hands. Therefore, you should wash your hands every time you put the mask on or take it off. Washing your hands after contact with the mask will avoid transferring material from your fingers to your eyes. After taking it off, wash your hands again so that anything transferred to your hands won't be transferred to your nose, mouth or eyes.

When you take your mask off, you should place it in an open container/box/bag to let the humidity from your breath captured on the inside of your mask evaporate. Do not put it in a sealed container. We suggest always placing it in the container with the front of the mask facing up so the contaminated side of the mask is not against the container surface. Although we have performed no specific studies, recommendations in the literature suggest after 3-4 days, there is likely no living viruses on the surface. However, this does not suggest you do not wash your hands after every time you touch the mask. Also, using disinfecting solutions or wipes containing alcohol have been shown to damage the non-woven filter media and should not be used.