



## Obtaining N-95 Respirator Letter

Many clinical rotations will require that you are fitted for an N-95 Respirator to protect you against tuberculosis and other airborne infections when caring for patients who have, or are presumed to have, these infections. In order to be fit tested for an N-95 respirator, you will need to fill out the SHAC “Respirator Medical Evaluation Questionnaire.” This is a screening tool required by OSHA to make sure that you do not have a condition that prevents you from wearing a respirator or from participating in the fit testing process. Therefore, it is important that you answer the questions fully and honestly.

\*Please be aware that each brand, model, and size of N-95 respirator will fit differently. When you are fit tested, it is important that you note the brand, model, and size of mask you have been cleared to use so that you are using the appropriate mask. The test fitting is not universal and does not imply proper fit with any device other than the one tested. Also, fluctuations in weight and other facial or dental alterations may affect the efficacy of the mask and will require another fit test.

\*Please be aware that facial hair, such as a beard and mustache, can affect the ability of a respirator to form a proper facial seal. This means your mask cannot protect you from harmful infectious agents as intended. If you decide to grow facial hair you will need to be tested on another respirator device compatible with facial hair.

\*Please **do not wait** until the day you are scheduled for your N-95 fit testing to seek a clearance letter from SHAC. We cannot guarantee that you will be cleared in time. Certain health conditions may require a physical exam before you can be cleared for respirator fit testing.

Please upload your completed Respirator Medical Evaluation Questionnaire to the SHAC Student Health Portal, or call SHAC at 505-277-3136 to schedule an appointment with an Allergy and Immunization nurse. Please turn in your Medical Evaluation Questionnaire **at least** one week prior to your N-95 respirator fit test appointment. Clearance letters are sent via the patient portal through secure message.

Fit tests are conducted at UNM Environmental Health & Safety, <https://ehs.unm.edu/occupational-safety/respiratory-protection.html>. You will need to take a physical copy of your clearance letter with you for your scheduled time of testing.

### *Physiologic effects of respirator use:*

- Pulmonary
  - Increased work of breathing
  - Decreased endurance
  - Increased breathing resistance
- Cardiac:
  - Increased heart rate
  - Increased cardiac work load
  - Increased blood pressure
- Emotional/Psychological:
  - Anxiety
    - Claustrophobia

### *Potential contraindications to respirator use:*

- Certain types of pulmonary disease
- Certain types of cardiac disease
- Claustrophobia