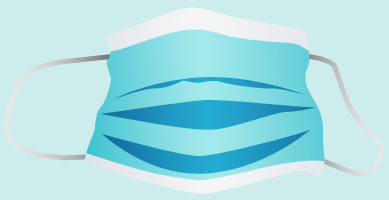
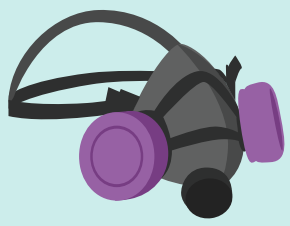
Understanding the Difference

	 Surgical Mask	 N95 Respirator	 Elastomeric Half Facepiece Respirator
Testing and Approval	Cleared by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (**FDA**)	Evaluated, tested, and approved by NIOSH as per the requirements in 42 CFR Part 84*	Evaluated, tested, and approved by NIOSH as per the requirements in 42 CFR Part 84
Intended Use and Purpose	Fluid resistant and provides the wearer protection against large droplets, splashes, or sprays of bodily or other hazardous fluids. Protects the patient from the wearer's respiratory emissions.	Reduces wearer's exposure to particles including small particle aerosols and large droplets (**only non-oil aerosols**)	Reusable device made of synthetic or rubber material
Face Seal Fit	Loose-fitting	Tight-fitting	Tight-fitting
Fit Testing Requirement	No	Yes	Yes
Designed for Reuse	No	No	Yes
User Seal Check	No	Yes. Required each time the respirator is donned (put on)	Yes. Required each time the respirator is donned (put on)
Filtration	Does NOT provide the wearer with a reliable level of protection from inhaling smaller airborne particles and is not considered respiratory protection	Filters out at least 95% of airborne particles including large and small particles	May be equipped with filters that block 95%, 99%, or 100% of very small particulates. Also may be equipped to protect against vapors/gases.
Leakage	Leakage occurs around the edge of the mask when user inhales	When properly fitted and donned, minimal leakage occurs around edges of the respirator when user inhales	When properly fitted and donned, minimal leakage occurs around edges of the respirator when user inhales
Use Limitations	Disposable. Discard after each patient encounter.	Ideally should be discarded after each patient encounter and after aerosol-generating procedures. It should also be discarded when it becomes damaged or deformed; no longer forms an effective seal to the face; becomes wet or visibly dirty; breathing becomes difficult; or if it becomes contaminated with blood, respiratory or nasal secretions, or other bodily fluids.	Reusable and must be cleaned/ disinfected and stored between each patient interaction

*As of July 2, 2018, NIOSH evaluates N95 FFRs intended for use in healthcare for biocompatibility, flammability, and fluid resistance to ensure conformity to relevant standards during the approval process. These tasks were previously performed by the FDA.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health

Resources:
Hospital Respiratory Protection Program Toolkit
http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2015-117/pdfs/2015-117.pdf
Implementing Hospital Respiratory Protection Programs: Strategies from the Field
https://www.jointcommission.org/assets/1/18/Implementing_Hospital_RPP_2-19-15.pdf