

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT MEDICAL FACE MASKS IN DENTAL SETTINGS.

Q&A with Wava Truscott, PHD

Why do I need a fluid-resistant mask?

If your mask is not fluid resistant, you are not adequately protected against splashes or sprays. Dental power instruments and air-water syringes create a visible spray that contains droplets of water, saliva, blood, microorganisms, and other debris which can land on the dental healthcare worker, nearby surfaces or the patient.¹ Wearing a fluid resistant mask helps protect the wearer from mucosal contact with, or inhaling these potentially infectious splashes and sprays.³

Is there a meaningful difference between a mask that offers a 95% BFE versus 99.7% BFE?

A higher percentage indicates higher filtration efficiency; e.g., 95% BFE indicates 5% of the aerosolized bacteria used in testing passed through the mask material, while 99.7% BFE indicates only 0.3% passed through.

What type of medical face mask is recommended for dental professionals?

It is recommended that dental professionals wear a surgical mask that protects against microorganisms with >95% bacterial filtration efficiency, and also protects from droplet spatter that might contain bloodborne pathogens or infectious microorganisms.¹

What is ASTM?

ASTM International is one of the world's largest standards developing organisations.²

How do the ASTM test methods resonate with European norm EN14683:2014 for facial protection?

ASTM covers some of the test methods used to test medical facemasks against EN14683. All masks tested against ASTM test methods (bearing an ASTM classification) will provide fluid protection for the user from Low (Level 1) to High (Level 3). This is a significant difference compared to EN14683 where fluid protection is only required for Type IIR masks.

Which ASTM level is equivalent to a Type IIR facemask?

ASTM Level 2 masks offer the same level of fluid protection as an EN14683 classified Type IIR mask while ASTM level 3 masks exceed the level of fluid protection.

Why did Halyard decide to add ASTM classified masks to their range?

Halyard offers their customers the best possible protection to prevent the spread of infections. Adding the ASTM range to the HALYARD® facemask portfolio offers customers an even broader choice of facemasks to choose from based on level of protection and preference.

How do I know my current facemask is ASTM rated for Fluid protection?

Look at the package! The new ASTM F2100-11 standard requires a graphic display on the packaging stating the mask's performance level.²

How often should I change my mask?

The mask should be changed between patients, because the mask can become contaminated with infectious materials. If the mask becomes wet, it should be changed even during patient treatment, when possible.¹

Sources/References:

Wava Truscott, PHD contributed to this Q&A while employed at Halyard Health, Inc.

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- 2 ASTM International. Standard Specification for Performance of Materials Used in Medical Face Masks. Vol ASTM F2100-11. West Conshohocken, PA: ASTM International; 2011
- 3 Siegel JD, Rhinehart E, Jackson M, Chiarello L. 2007 Guideline for Isolation Precautions: Preventing Transmission of Infectious Agents in Health Care Settings. Am. J. Infect. Control. Dec 2007;35(10 Suppl 2):S65-164.



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