braveFACEmasks

Sterilizing and Disinfecting Recommendations

These are "loose" guidelines, and best guesses based on our limited, but relevant education and experience:

Steam sterilization-This method requires a **consistent** and **prolonged** exposure to steam at a high temperature (preferably within a closed environment) to be effective. The use of steam cleaners for clothing or floors will not be sufficient for this method.

Home dishwasher-This method can be used if one can use an **isolated STEAM** function on their dishwasher (for the entire cycle). Many dishwashers offer a "sanitize" feature, which is not the same, and utilizes hot water for this cycle. Hot water sterilization is not recommended for these masks, although it would not damage them (they are water-proof, but the water molecules are simply too large to penetrate the fabric, hence their effective use for sterile surgical instrumentation). This could be used if there is no other alternative, as a stand-alone cycle, on the top rack, with no soap and no other dishes. Also, many dishwashers utilize a steam function **as an addition/in conjunction** with their wash cycles. This *could* be used, **without soap or other dishes**, on the top rack, and for the ENTIRE cycle, to ensure that the steam portion has actually occurred.

Cpap sterilizer-This machine is a quick and convenient way to sterilize/sanitize. It is roughly a 10 minute cycle, and uses no water or chemicals, but instead uses activated oxygen, which is an effective method of sterilization.

Baby bottle sterilizer-This is probably the best way to STEAM sterilize these masks. The sterilizer must be an independent unit (not a microwaveable sterilizer), and should run through an entire cycle (roughly 6 minutes for most models).

Oven-This method could be used by placing the mask on a clean surface/rack/aluminum foil and "baked" for 10-15 minutes at 200-225 degrees F.

Disinfectant spray-This method is probably the most convenient and realistic for most people. It is effectively being used by many of our users. Any brand of disinfectant spray can be used (Lysol or generic brand), in any scent or unscented. The mask and ties should be sprayed in its entirety, and then hung to dry completely before subsequent use.

Rotation method-If a person has adequate supply, they may simply rotate the usage of their masks by using a mask every 48-72 hours, to allow any contaminants to "die off". Some of our users use this method in conjunction with the disinfectant spray. We know that the COVID-19 virus is not a very hardy virus, but easily transmissible.

\*These are best guesses based on personal experience and education and are only recommendations to help eliminate germs and safely reuse our masks. Also stated above, water WILL NOT damage these masks, but is not an effective method to sterilize them, as the fabric is water-proof and will not penetrate the fabric. Super hot water on the outside surface for extended periods of time (as in the sanitize function of a dishwasher) is better than nothing, but is not the most effective.

\*Boiling could also be used as a sterilization method, but is not preferred or recommended as the routine method.

\*We have received feedback that after long-term use, our masks begin to accumulate facial oils/makeup/dirt from one’s face. Although we are unsure of the result of repeated washing with a conventional washing machine, or with hand washing, our recommendation is to try the following:

--Spot clean with Dawn dish soap or other degreasing dish soap and wipe clean with a damp cloth.

--Hand wash with hot soap and water and allow to air dry. DO NOT scrub, as this will damage the fibers of the medical wrap, resulting in a “fuzzy” appearance and decreased effectiveness.

--Run through the delicate cycle of the washing machine (preferably inside a “delicates bag”).

--A high heat, conventional dryer is an appropriate drying method, as is air drying.