

# Centre warns against use of N-95 masks with valve respirators

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N-95 masks with valved respirators do not help prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus, a health ministry expert has said. Doctor Rajiv Garg, Director-General of Health Services – which comes under the Ministry of Health – has urged all states and union territories to take cognizance of the fact that such masks won't check the spread of COVID-19.

## **Key Highlights**

- In a letter dated July 20 and addressed to health authorities concerned in all states and UTs, he said: “The use of valved respirator N-95 masks is detrimental to the measures adopted for preventing the spread of coronavirus as it does not prevent the virus from escaping out of the mask.”
- The letter further urged the authorities to revisit the advisory issued by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare regarding the use of home-made protective cover for the face and mouth, which is available on the ministry's website.
- The states and UTs have been directed to take necessary steps to prevent inappropriate use of N-95 masks.
- Notably, valved respirator masks with gaskets are effective in protecting the wearer from pathogens suspended in the air but do not prevent the virus from spreading from an infected person wearing it to his or her immediate surroundings. These masks have a plastic gasket embedded in the fabric, which is essentially a one-way valve. This means it filters out pathogens from the air you breathe in, but opens up while exhaling, letting the pathogen escape the mask.

**SOURCE:** *The Hindu*