

# Tips to Avoid Counterfeits

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued guidance, [Counterfeit Respirators / Misrepresentation of NIOSH-Approval](#), to help healthcare professionals avoid buying counterfeit masks\*. This page includes information on how to identify a NIOSH-approved respirator, and also a link to NIOSH Certified Equipment List and a NIOSH Trusted Source page.

See the ADA's [mask comparison chart](#) and [interim mask and face shield guidance](#).

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|  <p><b>Tips for spotting suspicious websites and/or marketplaces before you buy</b></p>  |  <p><b>Signs that an N95 mask** may be counterfeit</b></p>   |
| <p><b>Website tip-offs:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary email contact uses a free email service</li> <li>• Presence of typos, bad grammar and other errors</li> <li>• Contains broken links</li> <li>• Site is unfinished and temporary “dummy” text is still present</li> </ul> <p><b>Third-party marketplace red flags:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of terms like “legitimate” and “genuine”</li> <li>• Customer feedback that seems suspicious</li> <li>• Inconsistency in the type of products sold</li> <li>• Prices that are too good to be true</li> <li>• During times of shortage, claiming “unlimited stock”</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of, or misspelling of NIOSH in the marking</li> <li>• Claiming approval for use by children</li> <li>• Presence of decorative add-ons</li> <li>• Lack of NIOSH approval (TC) number on the N95 or headband</li> <li>• Lack of any type of marking on the N95</li> <li>• N95 has ear loops instead of headband</li> </ul> |

\*The CDC uses the term "respirators" in relation to N95, KN95, etc., whereas the ADA uses the term "masks."

\*\*Does not apply to KN95 masks.

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