**MYTH:**
An N95 respirator and a surgical mask provide the same protection.

**FACT:**
A NIOSH-approved N95 respirator forms a seal against the user’s face, preventing particle penetration around the edges. The filter has passed NIOSH tests to determine that it protects against at least 95% of airborne particles.

Because surgical masks do not seal against the face and the filters have not been tested, the same level of protection against airborne particles cannot be guaranteed.

**MYTH:**
I can decorate my N95 respirator to look stylish!

**FACT:**
Any alteration of the N95 will void the NIOSH approval because respirator cannot no longer be guaranteed to provide the necessary level of protection.

**MYTH:**
There’s no way to verify if an N95 respirator is actually NIOSH-approved.

**FACT:**
A list of approved N95 respirators is updated every month. Find it at Knowits.niosh.gov under the “Approved Particulate Filtering Facepiece Respirators” tab.