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MEDICAL OBSERVER **OPINION**

I'm an ENT surgeon in Melbourne and I'm struggling to get N95 masks



Dr Eric Levi

Dr Levi is an ENT specialist who blogs at ericlevi.com.

🕒 2 minutes to
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It happened again the other day. I asked for an N95 mask for my airway operating list. One hospital provided, another said 'no'.

Yes, preoperative swabs are negative, but we know that there is a false negative rate and I spend 3-4 hours in multiple patients' nose, oral cavity, oropharynx, larynx and trachea in one session.

The risk for aerosolisation is high and I - as the surgeon standing 15-30 cm away from the patient's mouth - am exposed.

The mask has become yet another symbol. Not a symbol of freedom or anything, but a symbol of value and trust.

