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# The efficacy of standard surgical face masks: an investigation using "tracer particles"

G B Ha'eri, A M Wiley

PMID: 7379387

## Abstract

To examine the efficacy of currently used synthetic-fiber disposable face masks in protecting wounds from contamination, human albumin microspheres were employed as "tracer particles," and applied to the interior of the fact mask during 20 operations. At the termination of each operation, wound irrigates were examined under the microscope. Particle contamination of the wound was demonstrated in all experients. Since the microspheres were not identified on the exterior of these face masks, they must have escaped around the mask edges and found their way into the wound. The wearing of the mask beneath the headgear curtails this route of contamination.

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