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**RESPIRATORY VECTORS AND YOU**

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**DATE:** 7/31/2007  
**TO:** EMS AND FIRE PERSONNEL  
**CC:** ANYONE ELSE  
**FROM:** MIDSTATE MEDICAL CENTER EMS OFFICE  
**RE:** RESPIRATORY COMPLAINTS

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In some instances the use of goggles is extremely important in battling viruses that EMS providers are exposed to. Whether it is the common cold, TB or Avian Influenza, the use of goggles greatly reduces the chance of infection. Many EMS professionals wear their **N-95 masks (HINT!)** when confronted with a possible infected patient who is actively coughing, but still leave their eyes exposed. Why does it matter you ask? Simple. Your eyes are always moist and continually drain into the ducts in the corner of your eyes. This drain leads right into the nose, so any airborne droplets can land on your eye and be quickly transferred to the nose where it is then inhaled into the lungs. Think how many times you have interviewed patients in close proximity who is actively coughing?

Air in the back of your ambulance is not exhausted very well but is always in motion either from the heater, AC, fans or just the movement of your bodies. This keeps the droplets in constant motion until they find a solid surface to adhere to. It is this very reason that makes the use of respirators and goggles extremely important in protecting ourselves from the various airborne diseases that we may encounter.

TJR