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## Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham launches three-ply N96 nano mask

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Scientists of the Centre for Nanosciences & Molecular Medicine at Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham have launched a unique three-ply N96 nano mask based on cutting-edge nanotechnology. This cost effective mask offers far superior filtration and breathability than the conventional N95 and surgical masks, the scientists claimed.

This long-lasting, skin-friendly, odor-free and reusable Amrita N96 Nano Mask, which costs less than Rs 200, can be washed up to 30 times. It provides very comfortable wear even for long durations. The fabric makes it effortless for the wearer to breathe in and out even while providing almost 100% protection against harmful microbes. Hardly any other mask in the world offers such high breathability (level 2) with maximum protection (99.9%). Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham is offering the technology for licensing to others for volume production and to bring the cost of the mask down further.



The Amrita N96 Nano Mask with nano-layered filter is lab tested to provide 99.9% bacterial and virus aerosol filtration as well as 96% particle filtration of more than 3 microns. It has also been tested by the South India Textile Research Association (SITRA), the premier laboratory supported by the Union Ministry of Textiles, to test masks and PPEs in the country.

"The Amrita N96 Nano Mask is far ahead of conventional surgical and N95 masks in providing protection to the wearer and enhancing the everyday experience with innovative nano-technology. It uses a one-of-its-kind nano-engineered filter fabricated with eletrospun bio-friendly polymer

nanofibers. The nano-sized channels and interconnected pores in the nano-filter cause an enhanced 'slip effect' which ensures low air resistance for better breathability on one hand and high filtration efficiency on the other," said Dr. Shantikumar Nair, Dean (Research) with Centre for Nanosciences & Molecular Medicine, Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham.

The specific designing of the mask also offers antifogging property. It is an ideal safety gear for healthcare workers and anyone else against infections caused by inhaling harmful bacteria and viruses, he added.

Explaining how the mask works, Dr. Deepthy Menon, Professor – Nanosciences, Centre for Nanosciences & Molecular Medicine, Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, said: "The Amrita N96 Nano Mask is a three-layered mask. These layers, made of cloth derived from polypropylene fiber, enclose nano-fiber membrane between them. The unique hydrophobic nature of this membrane completely blocks the passage of micro-droplets and water aerosols from one side of the layer to the other. This is what protects the wearer from breathing respiratory micro-droplets exhaled by another person and getting infected. This washable, durable and reusable mask ensures 99.9% bacterial and virus aerosol filtration."

Dr. CR Reshmi, Scientist with Centre for Nanosciences & Molecular Medicine, Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, said: "The nano-coating, though sophisticated, involves easy to use technology that is scalable and apt for industrial applications for a variety of filtration products that we are currently working on."