

LIMITING FACE COVERING SKIN IRRITATION

For some people, face coverings can cause dry skin and skin irritation. This is more common for people who need to wear a face covering for long periods of time, like health care workers, retail workers and school staff and students.

One reason irritation occurs is that face coverings do not allow airflow to the face. When a person breathes, moisture can build up and become trapped on the face. That dark, warm environment can cause dry skin and skin irritation. In addition, face coverings can irritate the skin simply by rubbing against it, or by exposing the skin to allergens. Dermatologists agree there are some simple steps you can try to reduce this irritation.

10 TIPS FOR REDUCING SKIN IRRITATION WHEN WEARING A FACE COVERING

1

Clean and moisturize your skin every day.

When washing your face, use a mild, fragrance-free cleanser. Apply a moisturizer right after washing your face. For skin redness, stinging, burning and dryness, use a moisturizer with one of the following ingredients: Hyaluronic Acid, Ceramide or Vitamin E. To prevent breakouts, use one that is formulated for your skin type:

- Oily skin: Gel moisturizer
- Normal to combination skin: Lotion
- Dry to very dry skin: Cream

2

Apply thin layer of petroleum jelly or lip balm to protect your lips.

3

Avoid wearing makeup under the mask. Makeup is more likely to clog your pores and lead to breakouts.

4

To reduce skin problems, avoid harsh products such as chemical peels, exfoliants, or retinoids.

5

Select a mask that offers a snug, but comfortable fit. If the mask feels too tight or slides around on your face, it can irritate your skin.

6

Select a mask that has soft, natural and breathable fabric, such as cotton, on the inside layer that rests against your skin. Avoid synthetic fabrics, such as nylon, polyester, and rayon on the layer that rests against your skin.

7

Take a 15-minute face covering break every 4 hours when it is safe to do so.

8

Replace your face covering as soon as it becomes damp or wet.

9

Wash your cloth face covering after each use.

Washing it removes oils and skin cells that collect inside the mask which could lead to skin irritation. You can wash a cloth mask in a washing machine or by hand, but be sure to:

- Follow the washing instructions on each face covering.
- Wash the masks in hot water unless the instructions say otherwise.
- Use a fragrance-free, hypoallergenic laundry detergent.

10

If you have a skin condition that is being treated by a dermatologist, continue the treatment program unless otherwise directed.