



MedStar Health

Preventing Skin Reactions Related to the Use of PPE Masks*

Maintain a Healthy Skin Barrier Function (recommended for home)

1. Cleanse face with a gentle cleanser and warm (not hot) water. Pat dry
2. Apply a thin layer of a moisturizer- cream or ointment- preferably with dimethicone
3. Moisturizer is to be applied 1 hour prior to applying the mask to prevent it from interfering with the seal of the mask and/or increase skin friction

Apply Skin Barrier

1. Apply an alcohol-free skin barrier film protectant (No-Sting Skin Prep \diamond , Cavilon™ No-Sting Barrier Film, or Sensicare™ Sting-Free Barrier Wipes) to the affected areas (ears, nose, forehead)
2. Allow the product to dry completely (at least 90 seconds) before applying the mask.
3. Consider use of a bordered foam dressing if irritation persists. Bordered foam dressings may be applied after the skin barrier.

Apply Bordered Foam Dressing or Alternative (optional)

1. Assess all contact areas between the mask and the skin- the nose, cheeks, forehead and the posterior region of the ear
2. Apply a thin silicone bordered foam dressing (Allevyn® Gentle Border). Dressings can be cut to fit the affected areas. Alternative dressings include transparent films and hydrocolloids.
3. Check the sealing of the mask with the dressing and with the skin. The N95 mask must properly fit- there should not be any air leaks present.
4. Evaluate and monitor the interface of the dressing with the mask during your shift to ensure patency and proper seal.
5. Relieve the pressure/tension from the mask in the respective areas at least every 4 hours.
6. If the dressing and/or mask is wet or damaged, it must be changed immediately.

Skin Barrier/ Bordered Foam Dressing Removal

1. After removing PPE/ mask, wash your hands. Wear clean gloves to remove the bordered foam dressings at the end of your shift.
2. The film of the skin barrier can be removed with an oil-based moisturizer or petrolatum (Aloe-Vesta™ ointment, Vaseline™)
3. Wash your face and neck with a gentle cleanser. Pat dry.
4. Apply moisturizer.

* Guidelines are indicated for prevention/relief of symptoms related to irritant contact dermatitis. If an allergy is suspected, please contact Occupational Health.

References

Alves, P., Moura, A., Vaz, A., Ferreira, A., Malcato, E., Mota, F. (2020) PRPPE Guideline: Covid 19- Prevention of skin lesions caused by Personal Protective Equipment (face masks, respirators, visors, and protection glasses) Retrieved from

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