

FACIAL SKIN CARE GUIDANCE UNDER PPE

KEY POINTS

Background

There have been incidents reported of facial skin damage under PPE facial equipment. This “at a Glance” aims to provide consistent advice for the care of skin whilst wearing facial PPE.

Protecting Your Skin

Preventing facial skin damage beneath PPE

- Ensure you are correctly fitted for the equipment.
- Keep your skin clean and well hydrated / moisturised – apply creams at least 30 minutes before applying PPE.
- Consider use of a barrier skin wipe / skin protectant (and allow to dry thoroughly) if you are likely to be wearing PPE for extended periods. This will not protect your skin from over tightening, but may protect it from increased moisture. Check the barrier product does not build up residue under the mask.
- Take time to fit the mask. Ensure all folds in the mask have been used to optimise the fit and do not over-tighten. If you feel your mask is uncomfortable, move away from direct patient contact and doff PPE as per guideline.
- Regularly inspect your skin for signs of redness / soreness.
- Ensure regular breaks (recommended every 2 hours) from wearing a mask to relieve the pressure and reduce moisture build up. This will allow the skin time to recover.
- Stay well hydrated throughout the day.
- Caution: Skin protectants and emollients with white soft paraffin are flammable, you are advised not to smoke with them on your skin

Managing damaged skin on the face

- Inform your line manager and complete an incident report
- Consider the use of an alternative to the mask such as a hood
- Consider the use of a thin hydrocolloid or a tapered silicone foam dressing to protect your skin, but you must ensure a complete fit of your mask

Where can I find more information or support?

- *Infection Prevention and Control Team*
- *Tissue Viability Team*