



## Face coverings and dry skin

Face coverings now need to be worn in most indoor places, outside the home.<sup>[1]</sup> They cover the nose and mouth, which are the main ways the virus causing COVID-19 is spread.

Wearing a face covering is leading to reports of skin irritation and the use of facial emollients (medical moisturisers) is recommended.<sup>[2]</sup>



### Follow these steps to look after your skin

- Use a fragrance-free emollient on your face after wearing a face covering.
- Apply the emollient with smooth downwards strokes, but do not rub it in.
- Avoid wearing make-up under your mask, as it may block skin pores.
- If your lips become dry, wear a fragrance-free lip salve or an emollient ointment.



### If you already have a dry skin condition

- Cleanse your face by using your emollient as a soap substitute, and avoid the use of all soaps and detergents on your face.
- Continue using your prescribed skin treatment.
- If you have facial eczema that is made worse by wearing a face covering, the Government has exemption badges and cards on its website that you can print out.<sup>[3]</sup>



### Ask your GP

Please contact your GP to request your emollient prescription or purchase from your local Pharmacist.

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**References:** 1. Department of Health & Social care, 2020, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own> accessed 17th August 2020.

2. Lin P. et al. Adverse skin reactions among healthcare workers during the Coronavirus Disease 2019. Outbreak: a survey in Wuhan and its surroundings regions. Br J Dermatol 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjd.19089> • Lan J. et al. Skin damage among healthcare workers managing coronavirus disease-2019. J Am Acad Dermatol. 2020;82(5):1215-1216 • Yan Y. et al. Consensus of Chinese experts on protection of skin and mucous membrane barrier for health-care workers fighting against coronavirus disease 2019. Dermatologic Therapy. 2020; e13310 • Bhatia R. et al. Iatrogenic dermatitis in times of COVID-19: a pandemic within a pandemic, JEADV, 2020 European Academy of Dermatology and Venereology.

3. National Eczema Society, 2020, NES (2020). <https://eczema.org/blog/advice-on-coronavirus-covid-19-for-people-with-eczema/> accessed 17th August 2020.

