



- Gloves, surgical masks, N95 masks, goggles and face shields have been reported to cause irritant and allergic contact dermatitis amongst health care workers (HCW)
- This can be caused by different components of PPE, including adhesives, metal in clips, rubber in straps, and additives
- Pressure injury of the skin can develop from prolonged use of N95 masks and goggles.
- Excessive hand hygiene and use of hand sanitizer may also increase the incidence skin dermatoses

Risk factors for adverse skin reactions include: [1-3]



Prolonged duration of wearing PPE (>4-6 hours per day)

Past history of atopic dermatitis, sensitive skin, or dermatoses

Frequent hand hygiene (>10 times daily) and excessive sweating

Wearing an ill-fitted mask



5 Ways to prevent skin problems during COVID-19 [4-5]

1. **Avoid** antibacterial soaps: antibacterial chemicals can cause irritant or allergic skin reactions and are not superior to non-antibacterial cleansers
2. **Wash hands with warm water**, rather than hot water
3. If possible, **remove masks every two hours** to relieve pressure and shear from the skin. **Gloves should also only be worn on dry hands** and should be **changed regularly** to lower humidity



4. If PPE must be worn for a long period of time, consider using a **skin protectant** (such as petroleum jelly) to protect against excess moisture

5. Application of a strip of **hydrocolloid dressing** to nasal bridge, forehead or cheeks when wearing masks or protective eyewear may reduce pressure-related injury and ulceration



References

1. Lin P, et al. *British J Derm* 2020;10:111.
2. Lan J, et al. *J Am Acad Dermatol* 2020;82(5):1215-6.

3. Desai SR, et al. *J Am Acad Dermatol* 2020; S0190-9622(20).
4. Gefen A & Ousey K. *J Wound Care* 2020;29(5):245-259.
5. MacGibeny MA & Wassef C. *Arch Dermatol Res* 2020;1-3.



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question, concerns, possible exposures, etc.

POSH operates 8 am to 8 pm, Monday to Saturday and will get back to you as soon as possible