

Skin Tips for Wearing a Face Mask

Kaiser Permanente Cosmetic Services

1. **Wash your face:** Always put your mask on over a clean face. Choose a gentle cleanser that is fragrance and oil free (like Cetaphil or CeraVe cleanser). Rinse your face with warm water, not hot. Avoid scrubbing or rubbing the skin.
2. **Apply a good moisturizer:** Moisturizer keeps your skin hydrated and acts like a barrier to friction from your mask. Choose one that is fragrance and oil free. Look for protective ingredients like ceramides and hyaluronic acid. Avoid heavy products.
3. **Skip the makeup:** Don't wear makeup underneath your mask. Occlusion from a mask can cause makeup to clog pores and lead to breakouts.
4. **Protect your ears:** Elastic strap loops can cause friction on the back of your ears. If your skin is sensitive, you can attach the straps to buttons on a headband or to a clip behind your head. Some surgical masks can also be tied behind the head.
5. **Avoid harsh products:** Products like benzoyl peroxide can be more irritating under a mask. If you're wearing a mask a lot, either use less or stop using it altogether.
6. **Treat emerging skin problems as soon as possible:**
 - **Dryness and skin peeling:** These can be the first signs of irritation; over time your skin can become prone to sensitivity, redness, and dark marks. Always apply moisturizer before wearing a mask. After removing your mask, apply petrolatum ointment to irritated areas.
 - **Skin breakdown:** Wash your face with a mild cleanser, then apply petrolatum ointment to areas of skin breakdown. Another option is a barrier cream like Desitin Original.
 - **Acne/breakouts:** For acne-prone skin, look for a light moisturizer that says "non-comedogenic" (won't clog pores). You can also add a glycolic acid or salicylic acid wash to your regimen. If acne persists despite these measures, consider adding Differin gel (a mild retinol) which is over the counter. Start by applying a small amount at bedtime every 2-3 nights and increase to nightly as tolerated (as it can cause dryness and irritation initially).



For more information, questions or to learn about skin products, contact the South Sacramento Cosmetic Services Department at (916) -688-2685.