Prolonged Mask Use Prophylaxis and Treatment

Updated April 27, 2020

Ears
When expecting prolonged use of masks, the following steps are recommended for behind the ears care:

Skin injury prevention recommendations:
- Consider a headband with buttons or an "ear saver" device to protect ears while wearing mask.
- Apply a hydrocolloid dressing (ex. DuoDERM®) behind the ears for those who are at high risk of skin breakdown from wearing a mask.
- Apply a barrier film wipe (ex. Cavilon™ No Sting Barrier Film Wipe (1mL)) daily:
  - This product is intended to protect the skin from moisture, adhesives, and friction. Do not use on skin that is not intact.
  - This product provides a clear coating of protection on the skin. It is a hypoallergenic, alcohol-free, no-sting formula.
  - Apply per manufacturer's instructions.

Skin Injury treatment recommendations (skin is not intact or not blanchable):
- Consider consulting a wound ostomy nurse if skin breakdown occurs.
- Apply a hydrocolloid dressing (ex. DuoDERM® Extra Thin Hydrocolloid dressing)
  - Apply per manufacturer's instructions.
  - Change dressing per manufacturer instructions.

Face
It is important to note that masks should not irritate your skin. If you experience discomfort outside of the below scenarios, see your local Employee Health or Colleague Safety Department for guidance. When expecting prolonged use of masks, the following steps are recommended for care of the face:

Bruising
A tight seal is necessary for the mask to protect the user. However, to relieve pain from bruising, users can apply cool compresses for 20-30 minutes after their shift.

Eczema
For irritant contact dermatitis or allergic contact dermatitis, users should wash their face and apply hydrocortisone ointment 1% to affected areas, followed by a barrier cream meant for chapped skin (ex. Vaseline, Aquaphor).

NOTE: Barrier creams may interfere with the fit seal on an N95. Apply after mask use only.

Acne
Wash or wipe sweat off the area as soon as the mask is removed. Consider a face wash with salicylic acid or benzoyl peroxide. Do not wear cosmetics under an N95 as this may exacerbate the issue.
Skin Breakdown

Wash with a gentle soap or cleanser. Apply a barrier cream meant for chapped skin (ex. Vaseline, Aquaphor). While off-duty, consider a hydrocolloid dressing.

NOTE: Barrier creams or padding may interfere with the fit seal on an N95. Apply after mask use only.

Added April 27, 2020

Recommendations to Limit, Reduce and Care for N95 Mask Pressure, Irritation and Abrasions:

Recommendation: Any increased risk from bruising or abrasions associated with wearing masks do not outweigh the increased risks from not using masks appropriately. *To date, there is no evidence that COVID-19 can be transmitted through the skin.

Background:
Generally, frictional forces caused by medical devices (or other objects in contact with skin) distort cells and tissues, resulting in sustained shear that leads to skin and subdermal tissue damage. The clinical teams engaged the coronavirus care settings are consistently reporting facial skin tears and lesions caused by prolonged use of their protective face masks. Below are recommendations to limit and care for these symptoms:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RECOMMENDATIONS</th>
<th>DETAILS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>BEFORE SHIFT</strong></td>
<td>Control of any underlying skin conditions</td>
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<td>Ensure inherent skin conditions [eczema, acne, rosacea] are relatively well-controlled, as wearing masks can these conditions flare. HCWs with known skin conditions such as these should consult their physicians if they need help controlling these conditions, or if the conditions become aggravated.</td>
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<td>Maintain clean, well-hydrated and moisturized skin</td>
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<td>Drink enough water to stay well-hydrated. Use bland cleansers and moisturizers for the skin.</td>
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<td><strong>DURING SHIFT</strong></td>
<td>Tegaderm for skin that is broken.</td>
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<td>Tegaderm is a transparent medical dressing. Tegaderm transparent dressings can be used to cover and protect wounds. Advantages of Tegaderm include its breathability and conformation to the skin</td>
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<td>Relieve pressure of mask periodically while on shift</td>
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<td>Take breaks when able in isolation to relieve pressure, even temporarily.</td>
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<td><strong>AFTER SHIFT</strong></td>
<td>Use of bland emollients</td>
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<td>After shift moisturize face with bland emollients. Topical emollients are creams, lotions, or ointments that contain ingredients that soothe and soften the skin. The word emollient means a preparation that softens the skin. Another name for an emollient is a moisturizer</td>
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