

## Episode 3: Occupational dermatoses during the COVID-19 pandemic



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### In this episode we discuss:

- Strategies to prevent and treat occupational dermatoses
- Types of occupational skin conditions seen in health care workers
- Prevention of pressure/mechanical irritant contact dermatitis due to facial masks
- Patch testing for healthcare workers

### Example of pathway for the prevention of PPE induced facial skin damage:

1. **Wash face with a soap substitute** e.g. Epimax, ZeroDerm  
If applying a leave on moisturizer do so at least 30 minutes prior to applying a barrier film/dressings.
  2. **Apply Cavilon Barrier Film over area of nose where adhesive skin protectant will be placed i.e. bridge and sides.**  
Cavilon does not provide relief from pressure, but it may protect from friction, moisture and will help with any adhesive dressing to stick.
  3. **Apply strip of Siltape (or Mepitac) to where the edge of mask meets the nose.**  
**Hydrocolloid extra thin** may be used in place of Siltape; however due to the adhesive this may provoke skin stripping from the regular removal and an adhesive remover is strongly recommended when removing.
  4. **Check that the mask seal is maintained.**  
If Siltape does not provide adequate protection: follow steps 1 &2 and then apply: Mepilex Border Lite 4x5cm.
  5. **Dressings should be removed and replaced at each doffing as they may be contaminated.**  
The use of the adhesive remover e.g. Appeel wipes should be used when removing adhesive dressings.
  6. **Wash face with soap substitute.**
  7. **Apply preferred emollient to the face.**
- It is recommended that the masks are removed at least every 2 hours to relieve pressure (NHS England 2020).**

### References and further reading:

- Lan, J., et al., *Skin damage among health care workers managing coronavirus disease-2019*. Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology, 2020. **82**(5): p. 1215-1216.
- Navarro-Triviño, F.J., et al., *Allergic contact dermatitis caused by elastic bands from FFP2 mask*. Contact Dermatitis. **n/a**(n/a).
- Xie, Z., Y.-X. Yang, and H. Zhang, *Mask-induced contact dermatitis in handling COVID-19 outbreak*. Contact Dermatitis. 2020 May 10:10.1111/cod.13599. doi: 10.1111/cod.13599. Online ahead of print.

- NHS England and NHS improvement. Preventing facial skin damage beneath personal protective equipment. 2020 April. <https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2020/04/C0129-Preventing-skin-damage-under-PPE-9-April.pdf> (last accessed 5th May 2020)