



Dermatologist advice on how to manage and avoid ‘maskne’

Dermatologist Dr. Philip Tong shares 6 simple steps for avoiding or managing mask-related breakouts

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With public health orders stating that mask-wearing is mandatory in many settings, many people are now experiencing “maskne”, or skin breakouts from wearing a mask.

Dermatologist Dr Philip Tong, Deputy Director of Research at The Skin Hospital in Sydney and member of the [All About Acne](#) group, says that maskne is caused primarily by friction, heat and sweat, and it’s not just something that comes from face masks.

“This friction-related condition – known as acne mechanica – is common. We also see it in people who wear caps a lot,” he said.

Maskne usually appears as acne around the mouth and on the chin, areas where you may place a face mask for extended periods of time.

Dr Tong says there may be other underlying causes, too. If you suddenly have a rash, pimples or any breakouts on the face, see a doctor to make sure it’s properly diagnosed.

“It’s important to see a healthcare professional if you’re concerned, because not every skin outbreak, even when you’re wearing a mask, is due to maskne” says Dr Tong.

Dr Tong recommends the following 6 steps for managing maskne:

1. Use gentle skincare products

Avoid harsh cleansers or scrubs, and use gentle cleansers and moisturisers. This will help your skin maintain its healthy microbiome.

2. Keep makeup to a minimum

Try to go makeup-free (one advantage of wearing a mask is no one will know!) or keep your makeup to a minimum. Wearing less makeup will reduce some of the factors that cause maskne.

3. Use cotton or silk masks

A mask with an inner layer of cotton or silk can be more breathable and gentle on the skin, and cause less friction. Silk masks have become popular, but they may not be as breathable as cotton masks. It's important to find a mask that works for you and your skin type.

4. Wash masks regularly

If you're wearing reusable masks, use a clean mask every day rather than wearing the same mask several days in a row. Also, wash your masks regularly and ensure the washing process removes any residual makeup.

5. Change disposable masks often

If you are using disposable masks, it's important to use them as they're intended – by disposing of them after each single use. If you wear them for extended periods of time, some of the fabric starts to degrade and that's when the irritation occurs. Once the mask is wet through perspiration, it also loses its function as a mask and will no longer protect you.

6. Have mask-free time where possible

We all need to wear face masks at certain times (depending on Covid rules in your area), but when you're at home or in the car by yourself, take the opportunity to have as much mask-free time as possible. If it's safe to do so (based on your local requirements), have mask-free periods at work as well, to allow your skin to have a break from the mask and re-acclimatise.

If you continue to experience maske, then seek the advice of a healthcare professional. You can also find out more information from dermatologists about how to manage acne at the [All About Acne website](#).

ENDS

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Spokespeople [available for interview]

Dr Philip Tong, Dermatologist, Deputy Director of Research at The Skin Hospital in Sydney and member of the All About Acne group

About All About Acne

The All About Acne team are a group of medically-trained skin experts from across Australia who have an interest in acne management. These people donate their time and expertise in order to provide the most up-to-date, practical and relevant information on acne-related matters.