

“Maskne” – Are Masks Making Acne Worse During the COVID-19 Pandemic?

SKIN: The Journal of Cutaneous Medicine®,

Maskne: Exacerbation or Eruption of Acne During the COVID-19 Pandemic

VALHALLA, NY, USA, September 15, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The COVID-19 pandemic has



The Instagram hashtag, #Maskne, is trending with over 22,000 posts as people are wearing masks more frequently and longer because of COVID-19.”

Tamar Aliya Gomolin, BSc

brought about many changes, including the recommended use of face masks while in public spaces. Face masks are capable of reducing the chance of contracting COVID-19 by 85-96%. However, as mask use has become more widespread, more and more people have noticed the (re-)appearance of their acne. This new wave of acne has even inspired the social media hashtag #Maskne, which has trended on Instagram with over 22,000 posts talking about outbreaks of red pimples and whiteheads.

Tamar Aliya Gomolin, BSc and colleagues note in their recent study published in *SKIN: The Journal of Cutaneous Medicine®* that the increased use and extended duration of time that people wear masks may aggravate the skin, especially in areas on the cheeks and around the mouth that are in constant contact with a face mask. These mechanical factors are compounded by sweat that builds up that may physically block pores and cause outbreaks of red and potentially itchy bumps, especially in people that have had acne or are still prone to getting acne.

This type of mechanically-induced acne has often been seen among athletes who have to wear layers of protective gear for hours on end. In the athlete’s case, a large part of treatment is usually to reduce or remove the offending agent. Normally this would be enough to control the outbreak of pimples (though some cases do warrant prescription acne medications). The unfortunate and ironic twist is that, with the COVID-19 pandemic still ongoing and government recommendation/private-business policies still in effect, the same treatment cannot be said for “maskne”.

The authors note that the moisture, heat, and friction from face masks may be enough to irritate and damage the skin’s natural protective barrier. Therefore, the cornerstone to combatting “maskne” may start with using a gentle non-acne forming face wash and moisturizer, avoiding harsh and irritating products such as toners, excessively hot water, and alcohol-based products,

and using masks that fit properly. And, if all else fails, the authors note that the best approach might be the most conventional one—consulting a dermatologist for expert advice on acne treatment and medications.

SKIN: The Journal of Cutaneous Medicine® is a peer-reviewed online medical journal that is the official journal of The National Society for Cutaneous Medicine. The mission of SKIN is to provide an enhanced and accelerated route to disseminate new dermatologic knowledge for all aspects of cutaneous disease.

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