Guidance for the Prevention and Management of Skin Damage beneath PPE

Pressure damage to the face, neck, and ears under PPE can occur for three reasons

- Shearing
- Friction
- Moisture

Prevention of friction and shearing can be optimised through accurate fit testing and regular offloading of the mask ideally every 2 hours. Prevention of moisture can be optimised through barrier products such as Cavilon™ Non Sting Barrier Film.

1. First line prevention

Following trust guidance on face mask fitting ensuring all folds in the mask have been used. Avoid over tightening.

- Keep your skin clean and stay well hydrated
- If you want to apply moisturiser please do so 30 minutes before applying PPE
- Apply 3M™ Cavilon™ No Sting Barrier Film swab to all areas that are likely to become moist from sweat and/or expiration. This will take up to 90 seconds to dry
- Perform regularly inspection of your skin for signs of redness/soreness or open areas

Caution: Skin protectants and emollients with white soft paraffin, such as 50:50 ointment, are flammable; you are advised not to smoke with them on your skin. Cavilon products do not contain white soft paraffin.

2. Second line prevention

If at all possible avoid the use of dressings as they may compromise mask fit but if you need to use a product underneath your mask to protect the skin, consider the following;

You can apply either

- DuoDERM® Extra Thin can be cut to size and placed on the bridge of the nose, cheeks, tops of ears, and the chin or anywhere that contact friction is occurring
- Siltape can be used over the bridge of the nose, cheeks, and tops of ears and on the chin. Siltape is a silicone based tape and removal is gentle to the skin

3. Management

If a skin break or damage occurs to your face and/or ears;

- Inform your line manager and complete a health and safety DATIX incident form
- Contact clinical media to organise images ext 4319

For further advice please contact the tissue viability team via email at bsuwoundcare@nhs.net

Adapted from the NHSI/E guidance ‘Helping prevent facial skin damage beneath personal protective equipment’ Published 09/04/2020

Image; Duoderm Extra Thin application demonstration. Image provided by Ilona Kawa University Hospital – Kraków, Poland 30/03/2020