

THESE ARE THE FACE MASKS THAT COULD BE TOO HARSH, ACCORDING TO A DERM



GOOD LOOKS

by ZOE WEINER, NOVEMBER 15, 2017

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Considering that [staying in is the new going out](#), the motto, “Netflix and face mask” has all the makings for the perfect Friday night. That is, until you wipe off a hardened mask to discover a painful, red-tinged complexion where your smooth, glowing skin should be (ladies with sensitive skin, you know what I mean).

“If a mask is too drying, your skin will overcompensate by producing more oils that will, in the end, make you breakout even more,” explains holistic facialist Tess Adams of New York City’s [Take Care Spa](#).

There’s no “one size fits all” solution for our faces, so different skin types may react poorly to different ingredients. How, then, do you know if a mask is a no-no for you? “Harsh skin masks may cause itching, tingling, or burning on application,” says [Jessica Weiser, MD](#), a New York City dermatologist at [New York Dermatology Group](#). “Other signs that a mask may be too strong include redness or swelling of the eyes, tearing or eye itching, redness when the mask is removed, residual irritation, or dryness lasting hours or even days after treatment.”

So to spare sensitive complexions, I caught up with skin-care pros to parse out which masks might be too much.

Fuller’s earth clay

Long before sheet masks and those can’t-look-away magnet masks became the go-tos, clay masks were an integral part of a well-rounded routine. But there’s one type of mud to keep an eye out for if you tend to be reactive or already have a dry complexion. “Fuller’s earth clay is extremely powerful at absorbing oils and impurities and it’s commonly used for automotive products and even in cat litter,” says Dr. Weiser. “So it’s best avoided in skin care, as it is exceedingly drying and irritating when applied to facial skin.” Opt for a more gentle clay, such as kaolin, if you tend to be reactive.

Anything with hardcore exfoliators

Exfoliating masks can be a great way to reveal brighter, happier skin, but if they’re too potent they can leave skin red and irritated. “An intensely exfoliating mask will inflame sensitive, dry skin,” says Dr. Weiser. If you’re sensitive, she suggests staying away from ones containing AHAs, BHAs, and alcohols, which she says could result in pain-in-the-butt side-effects like redness, pain, peeling, and inflammation. If your sensitive skin needs [a good sloughing](#), try exfoliating with more gentle fruit enzyme mask.

Peel-off masks

[Peel-off masks](#) may be great for creating Instagram content, but they could wind up doing more damage to sensitive skin than they’re worth. “I avoid peel-off masks that contain any glue-based adhesive because they are pulling away beyond the dead skin cells at the surface and can cause significant damage to the skin,” says Dr. Weiser. She notes that anyone with super sensitive skin may be left with redness after one of these treatments, which could wind up lasting for days. If you feel any sort of tingling or burning sensation as you’re applying it, take it off ASAP and talk to your derm about new ways to spend your #FacemaskFriday.

For masks that *won’t* leave your sensitive skin feeling angry, Adams suggests sticking with products that are geared toward [organics and muds](#) because “they tend to carry more minerals and vitamins that...can do more for us in the long run.” Pair them with these sensitive [skin self-care habits](#) and you’ll wind up with your most radiant glow yet.