

LETTER

Practical tips for using masks in the COVID-19 pandemic

Dear Editor,

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is spreading rapidly worldwide. A long-time mask-wearing is essential for the public workers and medical professionals. However, the shortage of mask and facial skin damage for long-time wearing has become increasingly prominent problem.^{1,2} There are several practical tips worthy of reference.

First, many medical professionals always complained about the pressure of N95 masks. Long-time wearing N95 can cause deep facial indentation, even lead to skin damage. Tip 1: according to the practical experience of COVID-19 in Chinese setting, some patches may be placed between the pressured skin area and mask to reduce damage and protect the skin, especially the upper side of the mask. The patches coverage needs to be bigger than the scope of compression, and the material of it can be either hydrogel patches, silicone patches, woundplast, or paper towels. These add-on patches are also capable of preventing goggles from fogging (Figure 1A).

Second, the surgical mask always has been moisturized due to the high humidity of the wearer's expired air and splutter, and its

internal material frequently stimulated our delicate facial skin. Tip 2: adding a layer of a gasket in the inside of the mask. The gasket should be slightly thick and rectangular shaped, which just covers the mouth and smaller than the mask. To avoid from moving causing damage to mask sealed, the gasket could mount with double-sided foam tape. As long as the gasket is well hygroscopic, air permeability, and skin friendly, the materials of gasket can be paper towels, nonwoven fabrics, gauzes, and so on. Besides, this tip can also prolong the use-time of the mask and prevents the fogging of eyeglasses (Figure 1B).

Third, people also complain about the discomfort caused by wearing ear-hook masks, especially the kind made of elastic rubber, which will oppress the contact area of the ear, resulting in ear pain. Tip 3: using any availed string or hairpins to lengthen the ear-hook string, hence reduction of the pressure of ear skin can be reduced (Figure 1C).

These tips will help more people to use masks more efficiently and comfortably, especially for medical personals. Some people worry that these practices may affect the effectiveness of PPE, but the tools

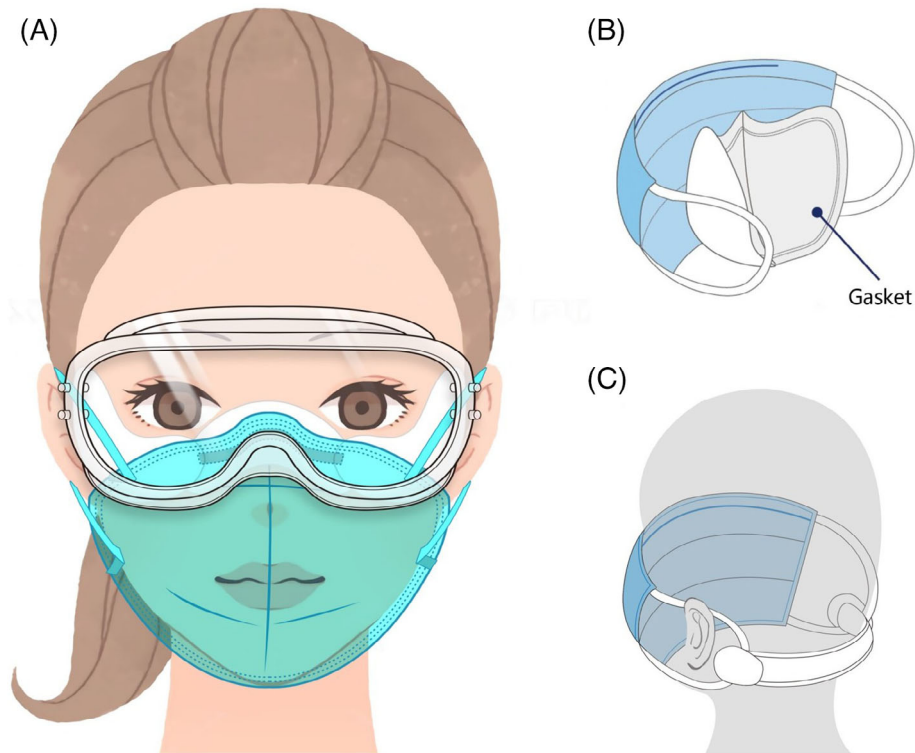



FIGURE 1 Illustration

occupy a small amount of space inside the mask and may not affect the tightness of the mask. We also hope these tips will be conducive to the prevention and control of COVID-19.

Nianzhou Yu^{1,2,3} 

Yi Xiao^{1,2,3}

Juan Su^{1,2,3}

Kai Huang^{1,2,3}

Shuang Zhao^{1,2,3}

¹Hunan Engineering Research Center of Skin Health and Disease, Central South University, Hunan, China

²Hunan Key Laboratory of Skin Cancer and Psoriasis, Central South University, Hunan, China

³Dermatology Department of Xiangya Hospital, Central South University, Hunan, China

Correspondence

Shuang Zhao, Department of Dermatology, Xiangya Hospital of Central South University, 87 Xiangya Road, Kaifu District, Changsha, Hunan Province, China.

Email: shuangxy@csu.edu.cn

ORCID

Nianzhou Yu  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6995-9840>

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