

6 Things You Need to Know Before Trying Face Sheet Masks

Author: Shannon Farrell

Date: September 22, 2014

Url: <http://www.womenshealthmag.com/beauty/face-sheet-masks>



It's the new trend in celebrity selfies: face sheet mask selfies. This lazy girl's facial has become a huge trend since it landed in the states from Asia, and for good reason. The product consists of a thin cotton sheet doused in a liquid-based formula that claims to moisturize, brighten, and even treat fine lines. And it's supposed to be super-easy to use: Just tap on and go. Sounds too good to be true, doesn't it? Debbie Palmer, a New York-based dermatologist, explains what you need to know before you shell out any cash on them.

They Don't Replace Traditional Masks

Don't let the name fool you: They're called masks because of their resemblance to the Phantom of the Opera's go-to accessory, not because they have the same results as your tried-and-true face mask. The cotton sheets are actually doused in a serum-based formula, so they won't exfoliate or cleanse deeply. However, most are packed full of vitamins, amino acids, and minerals—so they do come with their own set of benefits. They also won't dry out the skin like a clay mask formula.

...And They Don't Replace Serums, Either

“My patients prefer serums for everyday,” says Palmer. “These masks are more of a luxury, used for special events or flying when you have a lot of dryness. Used every day, they can get expensive—over \$90 a week.” Although the masks can be found anywhere (your local drugstore, Sephora, or department store counter), prices range from a little less than \$3 a mask (Garnier's Renew Dark Spot Treatment Mask is \$16.99 for a pack of six, ulta.com) to \$13.50 a mask (SKII's Facial Treatment Masks is \$135 for a pack of 10, sephora.com). The upshot? Daily use can get pretty pricy. Palmer recommends using a face sheet mask once a week. And since the hydration won't last more than one day, they won't completely replace a hydrating serum—so use your serum like you normally would, and think of the mask as a special treatment for added glow.

They're Best Used to Boost Hydration

These liquid-based formulas come in many variations that claim different results—lifting, preventing acne, hiding fine lines—but Palmer says you should only count on them for hydration. “Although there aren't any clinical studies that prove whether or not they penetrate better than—or even as well as—a regular serum, I do know this: When you put a mask on your skin, you can increase the water content. Occlusion causes a decrease in water evaporation from the skin.” This can also increase the temperature of your skin, from an average of 89.6 to 98.6 degrees.

They're Not Great for Acne-Prone Skin

The temperature spike that comes with occlusion has its downsides. “Increasing the temperature can increase the bacteria count on the surface of the skin, causing acne,” says Palmer. If you have acne-prone or oily skin, she suggests testing the mask on a section of your face, preferably the side of your cheek. Check for new blemishes the next day before proceeding with a full mask.

Application Can Be Tricky

The masks are one-size-fits-all, but not every face is the same size or even the same shape. To cover all corners of the face, Palmer suggests beginning at one end: “Start at the forehead, and

line up with the eyes so you don't get an air pocket." Pat the mask onto the cheeks, moving down toward the chin. Because the masks are so slick, it's best to lie down while they work their magic.

They're SuperClean

Sheet masks have become an airplane staple because they're so portable. Unlike traditional masks that require you to wash your hands (and even your hair) after application, you can just tap these masks on and go. After you remove the sheet, you can even leave the serum on as your moisturizer for the day.

© 2015 Rodale Inc. All Rights Reserved.