

# Mask formulations for the 'spa at home'

■ Claire Summers – Azelis, UK  
 Gina Cosby, Sarah Thiewes - Azelis, US  
 Tracy Wei - Azelis, China

In these unprecedented times with stress, anxiety and uncertainty surrounding us, we see an increased focus on our physical and mental wellbeing. The health and condition of our skin is also heavily impacted by our wellbeing and vice versa. Due to the current challenging conditions, we are witnessing an increased interest in all skin care solutions. We tend to focus more on selfcare to cope with these stressful circumstances. Next to that, many of us have been confined to working from our own homes and are using our gained commuting time to create a spa experience at home, especially since beauty salons are still closed in many countries. On top of all of this, we are getting used to a new reality in which we wear face masks when taking public transport or doing grocery shopping. Covering up our faces can lead to problematic and dehydrated skin and this side effect of the Corona crisis is also leading to an increased focus on skin care.

Today's consumer is looking for easy to use, flexible yet sustainable options with a much bigger emphasis being placed on achieving the best possible condition for your own skin. We are happy to present you a selection of Azelis facial mask formulations to answer today's consumer needs to address the increased awareness for skin care solutions following the Corona crisis. Before we look into the different options, we would like to answer two questions which might have popped up in your mind by now: "Why do people use masks in their beauty regimes?" and "What type of person uses masks?". The answer to the second question is the easiest and most straightforward one: everyone from the young to the more mature skin; as well as all skin types as there are many options, ranging from masks for dry skin, to greasy or more problematic skin, targeting issues such as clogged pores. Facial masks also come in formats that are irrespective of gender as skin care needs prevail. The first question is more of a challenge, with many possible answers. As mentioned in the introduction, one of the reasons could be the



increased need for home solutions as well as a higher demand for a true spa experience at home to relax and unwind.

As described in the Mintel report on Facial Skincare (2019 – "Connect with a 'positive ageing' movement"), we see much less of an emphasis on specific anti-ageing markers, such as lines and wrinkles, and a focus shifting to age perfecting and being proud of the skin you are in. Consumers are therefore no longer looking for quick fixes; testimonials of how the trend of wellbeing is set to stay with us for the foreseeable future.

Azelis Personal Care teams across the globe have developed multiple options for mask types to reflect the needs and wants of the consumer. It is definitely an area where one does not fit all. There are so many

possibilities due to the various needs of the individual consumer, the different skin types, an ever-expanding wish list for specific ethos or ingredients used within the formulation, and the time available: from a quick on-the-go format to a product that allows personalisation, to a more indulgent experience with a spa-like feel.

## Sheet masks

Let us go deeper into the types of masks available on the market today. The first type which cannot be ignored are the sheet masks. This format is very easy to use and is available in all price points: from mass market to prestige brands. They were first developed in Japan and Korea where many cosmetic products begin their life and new

personal care trends originate. They can be simply described as water-based formulations which are combined with a substrate to enable them to be easily portable. These formulations allow for addition of “essences” or actives to be combined at the point of application for a more personalised or interactive experience. The greatest issue with these masks, as perceived by the consumer, is that the majority are not sustainable as they are not often biodegradable (cfr. Mintel's 2019 Beauty Product Consumers (BPC) report). This Mintel report also stated that, moving forward, more focus on waste management is needed as reducing packaging is not enough. There is far greater potential for “out-of-the-box” thinking from manufacturers and brands in all areas of the life cycle of a beauty product: from raw material selection, to manufacturing to the “after life” of the product. More now than at any time in the past, consumers are increasingly socially and environmentally savvy and conscious, with high expectations. Whether it is the food they consume or the cosmetics they use, they are looking to reduce and refine their use of declining resources, use sustainable traceable natural ingredients and make a stand for the social issues that are important to them. In its report “Beauty with a brain” (2019), Mintel examines the needs for brands to prove their credibility, with 71% of Spanish beauty product purchasers trusting natural products and ingredients created by scientists. According to another Mintel study, 67% of beauty product buyers in France, Germany, Italy and Spain agree that brands should have sustainable programs aimed at reducing their use of natural resources (Mintel, “A year of innovation in facial skincare” 2019).

Formulation 1: Maskerade		
Phase	INCI	%w/w
A	Aqua	75.10
	Pectin	2.00
	Xanthan Gum	0.10
	Phenoxyethanol, Glycerine, Citrus Reticulata Fruit Extract, Citrus Aurantium Amara Fruit Extract, Citrus Sinensis Peel Extract, Ascorbic acid, Citric acid, Lactic acid, Aqua	0.70
B	1,3-Butylene Glycol	10.00
C	Aloe Barbadosensis Leaf Juice, Phytic Acid, Fucus Spiralis Extract, Tetraselmis Chui Extract	10.00
	Distarch Phosphate	1.00
	Menthol, Menthyl Lactate	1.00
	Synthetic Fluorphlogopite, CI 77891, Tin Oxide	0.10

Formulation 2: Golden Touch Eye Mask		
Phase	INCI	%w/w
A	Water	To 100
B	Glycerin	15.00
	Chondrus Crispus Extract/ Potassium Chloride	0.80
	Locust Bean Gum	0.60
	Cellulose Gum	0.20
	Xanthan Gum	0.20
C	Chlorophene Ether	0.20
D	Mica, titanium dioxide, iron oxide, tin dioxide	0.20

As the impact of global warming is changing the planet and an increasing world population pushes pollution to new highs, protection is a key buzz word for the future. With new technologies and clever formulations, it is possible to move with the times and future-proof your formulations. The Azelis EMEA Personal Care team developed Maskerade, an award-winning alternative to sheet masks. It is a

customisable, biodegradable mask made from a sustainable cold process pectin, which is allowed to dry and can then be cut to the required shape. It can be adapted with a wide range of actives to allow targeting of specific skin imperfections by the easy inclusion of water-based actives. Pectin is at the heart of this formulation as it is incorporated specifically for its buffering effect in the pH range 3-5, which is the optimum pH for healthy skin. *In vivo* and *in vitro* studies show short-term buffer effect with long-term alkali scavenging properties. It is also known for protecting the skin barrier and improving the moisturisation level of skin as it reduces TEWL by 20% due to the high molecular weight of acidic polymer.

The advantage of formulations based on natural gums is that when placed in warm water after use, they will dissolve leaving little or no residue, making them a solution to address the growing need for more sustainable options.

### Jelly masks

The next type of masks which are gaining in popularity as well as acceptance by the consumer are the so-called ‘jelly masks’. They are based on natural gellants, with a huge range of possibilities available to the formulator, going from carrageenan, locust bean gum, through to gellan gum. These also address the desire of the mask area to

Formulation 3: Exfoliating PHA Face Mask		
Phase	INCI	%w/w
A	Water	55.10
	Gluconolactone	10.00
	Hydroxypropyl Cyclodextrin	1.00
	Bentonite	5.00
	Kaolin	7.00
	Glycerin	8.00
	Xanthan Gum	0.30
	B	Cetearyl Olivat, Sorbitan Olivat
	Prunus Amygdalus Dulcis Oil, Hydrogenated Vegetable Oil, Camellia Sinensis Leaf Powder	3.00
C	Glycerin, Vitis Vinifera Flower Cell Extract	1.0
	Glycerin, Water, Nephelium Lappaceum Peel Extract	3.0
	Tocopherol	0.30
	Fragrance	0.30
	Phenoxyethanol, Ethylhexylglycerin	1.0
	Water, Sodium Hydroxide	QS

be more sustainable as the use of these natural hydrocolloids are growing each year. They give rise to a wide range of new, unique textures depending on the combinations used as there are so many synergies to be discovered from endless combination possibilities. The synergy between this wide range of natural rheology modifiers and thickeners, as already exploited in the food industry, offers so many possibilities for applications within personal care. The formation of these jelly textures is a natural progression to address the needs of the formulators for fun yet functional formats.

The Golden Touch Eye Mask has been developed by the Azelis Personal Care team from China, using a synergistic blend of carrageenan, locust bean and cellulose gum to create the perfect shape and texture to mould to the shape of the under eye for the highest contact due to its damp solid gel texture, allowing optimal hydration and firming of the skin. The final addition of the gold pearlescent pigment gives the product a more unique and appealing look, adding a touch of luxury with a higher impact and greater radiance.

### Acidic masks

In the US, 62% of facial skin care users are mostly interested in the efficacy of their skin care products and not caring much about trends (Mintel "BPC trends" 2019). As a result, a format which is gaining in popularity is the acidic mask, with a peeling effect rather than a physical exfoliation. The Azelis Personal Care team from the US has developed the Exfoliating PHA Face Mask which uses Gluconolactone, a plant-based Polyhydroxy Acid (PHA) which is suitable for use for all skin types, including sensitive skin, to gently exfoliate dirt and impurities away. This mask helps to reduce fine lines and wrinkles, even out skin tones and it leaves the face with a radiant glow. It is simply applied as an even layer onto a clean, dry face, thereby making sure to avoid the lip and eye area, and left on for 15 minutes. The mask is then removed by using a damp wash cloth.

### Body masks

With the above formulations, we presented several facial masks but let us not forget that masks are not for facial use only. Masks are an effective way of hydrating skin on any part of the body, from top to bottom. The Azelis EMEA Personal Care team has developed the Ayurveda Phyto Mask which delivers a spa experience for the consumer and can be used all over the body to improve skin tone, promote cleansing and detoxify the skin against environmental aggressors. It is applied evenly to the skin and left for 15 minutes to obtain all the benefits, and removed before it dries, for ease of removal.

Formulation 4: Ayurveda Phyto Mask		
Phase	INCI	%w/w
A	Potassium Palmitoyl Hydrolyzed Wheat Protein, Glyceryl Stearate, Cetearyl Alcohol	6.00
	Cetearyl Alcohol	0.50
	Glyceryl Stearate	0.50
	Ethyl Oleate	6.00
	Octyldodecyl Myristate	7.50
	Chlorella vulgaris powder, Ribes nigrum	1.00
	Argania Spinosa Kernel Oil	1.00
	Tocopherol	0.10
	Carthamus Tinctorius Seed Oil, Moringa Oleifera Seed Extract	1.00
	B	Aqua
Butylene Glycol		5.00
Gluconolactone, Sodium Benzoate		1.00
Xanthan Gum		0.30
Stevioside		0.30
Glycerin, Water, Asparagus Racemosus Root Extract, Phenoxyethanol		1.00
C	Fragrance	0.50

Formulation 5: Strawberry Lip Mask			
Phase	INCI	%w/w	
A	Hydrogenated Polyisobutene, Ethylene/Propylene/Styrene Copolymer, Butylene/Ethylene/Styrene Copolymer	30.00	
	Petrolatum	47.80	
	Silica	2.00	
	Allantoin	0.20	
	Isononyl Isononanoate	8.00	
	Caprylic/Capric Triglyceride	10.00	
	Simmondsia Chinensis Seed Oil	1.00	
	Tocopheryl Acetate	1.00	
	B	Parfum	q.s.
		Dye	q.s.

The formulation utilises a natural emulsifier which results in a mask that leaves the skin feeling fresh and smooth, with an extraordinary moisturised and nourished sensation. Its lipid fraction fits perfectly with the stratum corneum, restoring the structural balance of the lipid film making it ideal for its use in mask formulations.

### Anhydrous formulations

Another trend which has been growing as highlighted in Mintel's "2025 BPC trends" report, is that water is the new luxury. This has led to a huge increase in the market of anhydrous formulations for all product categories and formats. The Azelis EMEA Personal Care team developed a Strawberry Lip Mask which is applied before going to bed. The formulation has a texture which is not greasy nor sticky and has a pleasant lip feel which prevents

lips from becoming dry or cracked while you sleep. The lip mask moisturises the lips due to a combination of jojoba oil with petrolatum and a gelled hydrogenated polyisobutene which reduces TEWL and therefore promotes hydration.

### Conclusion

Many more options are available for masks due to the endless possibilities of raw material combinations to achieve a wide range of textures, as well as the acceptance of so many different formats ranging from sheets to creams, water-based to anhydrous, quick solutions to masks which take time, allowing today's consumer to slow down. This category of skin care product is the perfect example that there is no need to compromise your skin care needs; you just have to find the right match for your needs and skin. PC