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'What we are breathing through our mouth and nose is actually hazardous

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waste': Scientists find evidence of toxic chemicals in some face masks

- **EXCLUSIVE:** Preliminary analysis found toxic chemicals in some masks
- These include known allergens and carcinogens as well as controlled substances
- Masks intended for use by the general public are not deemed to be PPE
- Therefore, they do not have to meet the standards of masks worn by doctors
- **85% of all masks made worldwide come from China and concerns have been raised over substandard manufacturing and opaque supply chains**

By [JOE PINKSTONE FOR MAILONLINE](#) 

PUBLISHED: 09:01 EDT, 1 April 2021 | **UPDATED:** 11:53 EDT, 7 April 2021



Scientists have found evidence that some face masks which are on sale and being used by members of the general public are laced with toxic chemicals.

Preliminary tests have revealed traces of a variety of compounds which are heavily restricted for both health and environmental reasons.

This includes formaldehyde, a chemical known to cause watery eyes; a burning sensations in the eyes, nose, and throat; coughing; wheezing; and nausea.

Experts are concerned that the presence of these chemicals in masks which are being worn for prolonged periods of time could cause unintended health issues.

Evidence obtained by [Ecotextile News](#) and shared with MailOnline reveals that although face masks should meet specific standards, not all do.

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Masks have been mandated in much of the world as they are a highly effective way of preventing transmission of coronavirus particles.

But face coverings designed for use by the general public are not regulated and fail to meet the same standards as medical grade PPE.

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Experts are concerned that the presence of these chemicals in masks which are being worn for prolonged periods of time could cause unintended health issues. In March, the UK Government issued advice saying children and teachers alike should wear masks in school

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'In the case of the blue-coloured surgical masks, we found cobalt – which can be used as a blue dye.

'All in all, we have a chemical cocktail in front of our nose and mouth that has never been tested for either toxicity or any long-term effects on health.'

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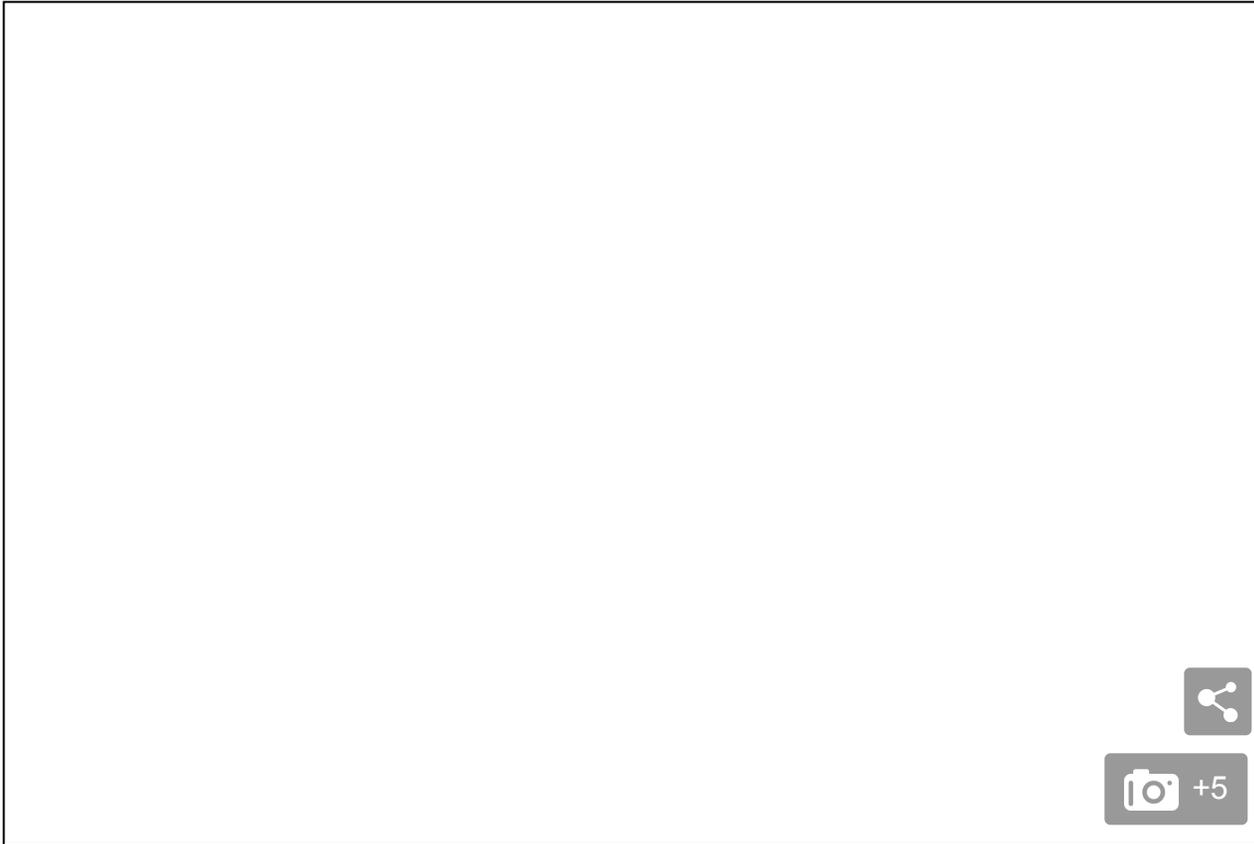
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Professor Michael Braungart, director at the Hamburg Environmental Institute, conducted tests on masks which had caused people to break out in rashes. 'What we are breathing through our mouth and nose is actually hazardous waste,' he said

Dr Dieter Sedlak, managing director and co-founder of Modern Testing Services in Augsburg, found other chemicals with his own unique testing method.

As well as detecting formaldehyde, he spotted clear evidence of hazardous fluorocarbons, which are heavily restricted.

Fluorocarbons are toxic to human health and scientists have recently called for them to be banned for non-essential use.

This group of chemicals was featured in the recent Mark Ruffalo hit film 'Dark Waters' where a water supply of an entire town was polluted by chemical giant DuPont.

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'Honestly, I had not expected PFCs would be found in a surgical mask, but we have special routine methods in our labs to detect these chemicals easily and can immediately identify them. This is a big issue,' said Dr Sedlak.

'It seems this had been deliberately applied as a fluid repellent – it would work to repel the virus in an aerosol droplet format – but PFC on your face, on your nose, on the mucus membranes, or on the eyes is not good.'

Formaldehyde in face masks causes dermatitis

A 2020 case study of a 38-year-old lab technician.

As part of her job she worked with various chemicals, including formaldehyde.

She did not wear a mask to work but did wear gloves. She began suffering rashes which were itchy and burning.

Doctors determined she was allergic to some of the chemicals.

She then changed jobs and became a hospital nurse.

Her rashes went away rapidly but then when working on a Covid-19 ward in April 2020 the dermatitis returned.

Symptoms flared up 'a few hours following the prolonged use of a particular polypropylene ('plastic') surgical mask.

The researchers and mask manufacturers believe 'trace impurities of formaldehyde' in the masks was causing the relapse.

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The doctors **wrote** in their case study: 'Because formaldehyde is a frequent contact sensitizer, and given that health care workers, patients, and consumers now often have to wear (polypropylene) surgical masks at work and in the public environment, similar cases might be expected in the future.

'To propose safer alternatives, the contact sensitizers potentially present in facial masks, and related medical devices, should be labelled, or at least be easily retrievable as in the present case.'

▶ **Lottie Moss sets pulses racing in a busty black corset, stockings and stilettos in a sizzling staircase photoshoot**

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Pictured, (A) a nurse, wearing a polypropylene surgical mask, (B) who developed rosacea-like allergic contact dermatitis from formaldehyde contained in the mask; (C) the positive patch test to formaldehyde revealing her allergy to the chemical



PFCs are commonly used in textiles to add a protective coating to items like rucksacks and jackets, but are not intended to be inhaled.

The concentrations of PFCs found on masks lie within the safe limit of 16 mg/kg, Dr Sedlak found, but when placed on a mask, just millimetres from a person's mouth, the level of exposure soars past the safe limit over time.

Both the academics say their work is not enough to conclude that all surgical face masks are dangerous or comparable, but believe some masks in circulation are of concern.

'Based on my practical experience there is certainly an elevated unreasonable risk,' says Dr Sedlak.

Face coverings designed to be worn by the public are not classed as PPE and therefore are not subjected to the same level of scrutiny as those which are intended for use by medical professionals.

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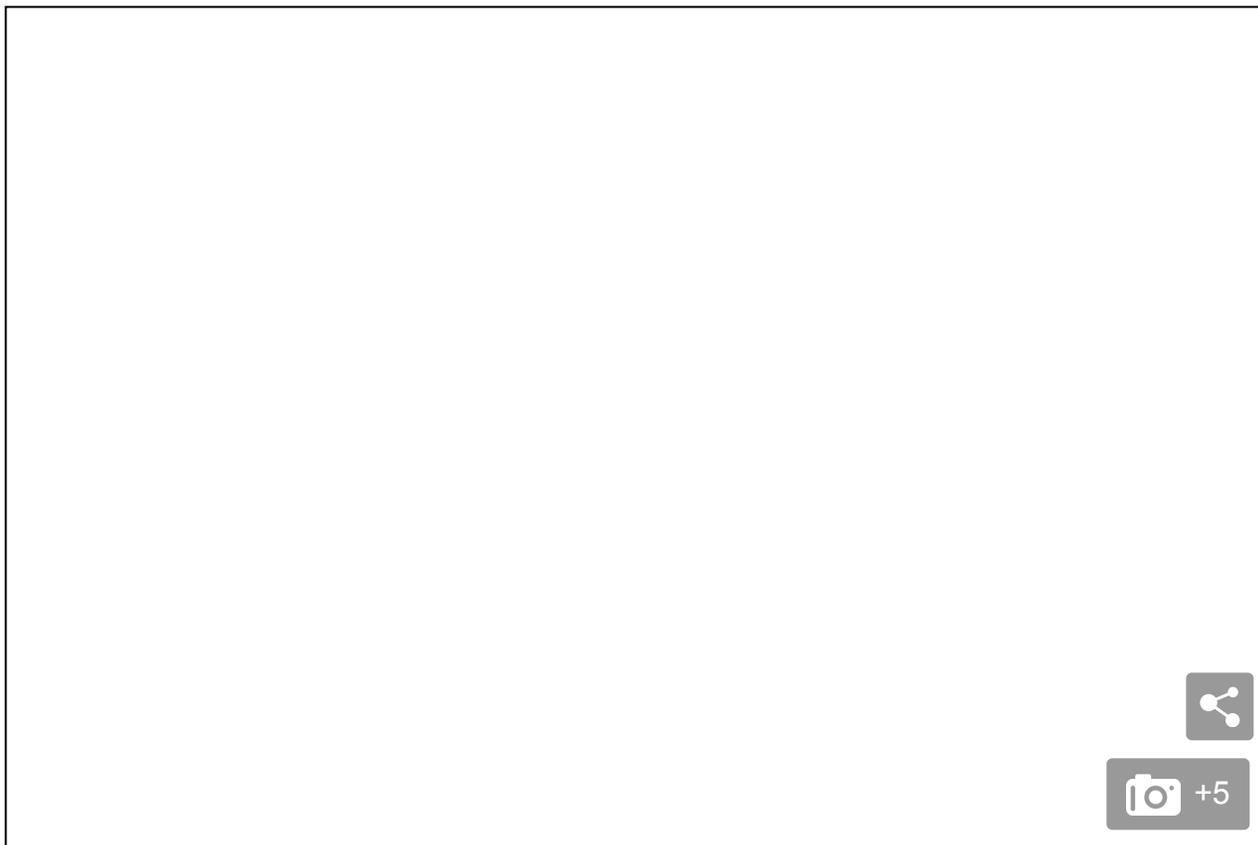
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Guidelines for their use and quality is determined by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy.

MailOnline has approached BEIS for comment.



Face coverings designed to be worn by the public are not classed as PPE and therefore are not subjected to the same level of scrutiny as those which are intended for use by medical professionals

However, the responsibility for **ensuring masks meet the laid out criteria** lies with the mask manufacturer and their local authorities.

But instead of having to reach medical grade standards and pass regular quality checks, these coverings only have to meet general safety laws.

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'The General Product Safety Regulations 2005 (GPSR) sets out the responsibilities of the producers and distributors of these products,' the UK government website states.

'As face coverings are not medical devices, we do not regulate these products.'

China was the world's leading mask manufacturer before the pandemic, and has solidified this position amid the Covid-19 outbreak, making 85 per cent of all masks.

In the first five months of 2020, for example, over 70,000 new companies registered to make or sell face masks in China, as companies seek to cash in on the virus.

The boom in demand for such products has led to concerns that masks are being recklessly made, and opaque supply chains in China raise further concerns.

Potentially toxic masks dished out in Canadian schools

Canada last week recalled millions of masks that were distributed to schools, transport workers and daycares by the government.

Health Canada has warned they may be toxic to the lungs after being urged to inspect the safety of the coverings.

The grey and blue masks are identified by the code SNN200642 and are from the supplier Metallifer.

Analysis found evidence of graphene nanoparticles shed by the masks.

Belgium gave pharmacists 15 million TOXIC Covid face masks

Health chiefs in Belgium are concerned that 15 million fabric masks given to pharmacists may be toxic and cause pneumonia.

According to a preliminary report carried out by Sciensano, the Belgian Institute for Public Health, the masks contain nanoparticles of silver and titanium dioxide that when inhaled could damage the respiratory tract.

The face masks were made in Asia by Luxembourg-based company Avrox.

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If graphene gets into the lungs it can be dangerous as it is highly abrasive and durable, leading to some people saying they felt like they were breathing in cat hair.

Another mask made by another company is also under investigation.

'Health Canada is currently reviewing data from two manufacturers of graphene-coated face masks to determine the safety and effectiveness of their devices, and will take appropriate action as necessary,' said Health Canada spokesman André Gagnon.

Millions of masks were distributed in Quebec but people have now been told to 'immediately store the boxes of masks in a secure and isolated location'.

Two toxicologists warned that those who wear the masks could develop pneumonia, according to a report in Dutch-language newspaper HLN.

The nanoparticles of silver and titanium dioxide are used to whiten the fabric of the face masks.

Dr Julian Tang told MailOnline: 'The use of metal ions may help to inactivate the virus and such ions may be safely, securely embedded in the mask material so that they do not pose an inhalation risk - and this feature/design could be specific to these Belgian masks only.'

But he says more research is needed if there are valid concerns over specific masks.

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The findings of these early studies come as the quality of masks used in **Belgium** and **Canada** has been called into question, with graphene and metal ion contamination.

Dr Julian Tang, a clinical virologist and honorary associate professor in the respiratory sciences department at the University of Leicester, echoed the sentiment of Dr Sedlak and Professor Braungart that more vigorous research is needed.

'Further studies on specific mask designs need to be performed if there is a perceived possible risk for any particular mask - and masks made by different manufacturers may not pose the same risks - if any exist,' he said.

He says if people are concerned about their masks, one option is to use professional surgical masks which do have to meet stricter standards.

'Southeast Asian countries have been using millions of surgical masks since the first SARS-COV-1 outbreaks in 2003 - with no reported ill effects,' he adds.

'But even before this, globally, surgical masks have been used in surgery by teams around the world - for decades - with no reported ill effects.'

Liz Cole, co-founder of the Us For Them organisation that advocates for children's rights, says the findings are particularly concerning for youngsters.

The recent reopening of schools in the UK was dependent on children wearing face coverings for long periods of time, including when walking around the premises and in communal areas.

'UsforThem are concerned that the recommendations for children to wear face coverings in classrooms seems to be informed by no new scientific evidence nor does any harm assessment appear to have been conducted,' she said.

'Given the potential issues of child health and welfare at stake it is imperative that potential harms of face coverings in classrooms be considered and weighed against benefits'.

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She looked sensational in an LBD

Face masks are a 'ticking plastic bomb': Three MILLION coverings are thrown out every minute and serve as carriers for other toxicants in the environment, experts warn

Three million face masks are discarded every minute as a result of mass adoption during the **coronavirus** pandemic, and experts warn it could soon lead to environmental catastrophe.

Face coverings are being worn by the majority of individuals around the world in order to curb the spread of SARS-CoV-2, the coronavirus which causes Covid-19.

However, they pose a greater risk to the environment than carrier bags because of their ubiquity and the fact there is no way to safely decontaminate and recycle them.

In an article **published** by the University of Southern Denmark, experts call the huge amount of face masks being worn and thrown away a 'ticking time bomb'.

They add that littering is causing masks to break down into dangerous microfibres and they may also be carrying harmful chemicals into the environment.

Environmental Toxicologist Elvis Genbo Xu from the University of Southern Denmark and Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering Zhiyong Jason Ren from Princeton University penned an article on the topic in the journal **Frontiers of Environmental Science & Engineering**.

And the conundrum of what to do with the recent deluge of masks truly is a new frontier for scientists, who have never before been faced with such a rapid explosion of a product for which there is no established responsible disposal method.

'With increasing reports on inappropriate disposal of masks, it is urgent to recognise this potential environmental threat and prevent it from becoming the next plastic problem,' the researchers warn.

Disposable face masks, although excellent at reducing viral transmission, are tricky when it comes to recycling as they are made from many different materials.



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'The common disposable surgical masks are made of three layers,' the researchers explain.

'The outer layer is made up of nonabsorbent material (e.g., polyester) that protects against liquid splashes.

'The middle layer is non-woven fabrics (e. g., polypropylene and polystyrene) created using a meltblowing process, which prevents droplets and aerosols via an electrostatic effect.

'The inner layer is made of absorbent material like cotton to absorb vapour.'



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▶ **Hilary Duff shares a sweet snap of her 'little goo' Mae James after welcoming baby girl via home birth two weeks ago**

▶ **Bethenny Frankel, 50, shows off her unbelievable figure in her Skinnygirl shapewear and sky-high stilettos as she plugs upcoming show**

▶ **Real Housewives Of Miami star Larsa Pippen stuns in a low-cut leather top as she hits the town... after breaking up with Malik Beasley**

▶ **Dr. Dre DENIES estranged wife Nicole Young's 'appalling' claims of abuse and alleges she is trying to squeeze money out of**

▶ **him... as \$1billion divorce gets uglier**

▶ **Sailor Brinkley-Cook shines in a one-piece swimsuit as she cuddles with her mom Christie Brinkley's dog Chester during a Caribbean vacation**

▶ **Kara Keough Bosworth pays tribute to late son McCoy on what would have been his first birthday... days after revealing she's expecting another child**

▶ **Ashley Graham enjoys 'stylish date' with husband Justin Ervin and their son Isaac in Venice Beach**

▶ **Megan Thee Stallion sports booty shorts and a cropped T-shirt while running on the treadmill during her 'rest day' at home**

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Hollywood exec Patrick Whitesell wears a wedding ring in a photo

▶ **shared by actress fiancée Pia Miller - as rumors swirl they have secretly married**

▶ **Amelia Hamlin, 19, rocks a sheer floral bikini cover-up to color coordinate with boyfriend Scott Disick, 37, on Spring Break in Miami**

▶ **Rich, funny, world's most attractive women throwing themselves at him - and Pete Davidson buys in Staten Island: SNL star splits the internet over his VERY modest new \$1.2M pad**

▶ **Paul Rudd meets an old nemesis in the form of Mini-Pufts in a new scene from the upcoming reboot Ghostbusters: Afterlife**

▶ **Tyler Perry is set to tell the origin story of Madea in a new Showtime drama set in 70s Atlanta**
Series already received a multi-script order

Timothee Chalamet and Lily-Rose Depp spotted keeping a low profile together in New York

▶ **City as they rekindle relationship**

▶ **Shailene Woodley and fiancé Aaron Rodgers keep flirting as they jet out of Orlando after a magical vacation to Disney World**

▶ **Brooklyn Decker, 33, shows off her gray roots that she has 'enjoyed' before sharing they won't last: 'To be clear, I'm getting it colored next week'**

▶ **'A beautiful soul has passed': Baz Luhrmann shares a heartbreaking tribute to Romeo + Juliet choirboy Quindon Tarver following his shock death aged 38**

▶ **Fleabag's 'hot priest' Andrew Scott 'lined up to play former Prime Minister Tony Blair in the final series of The Crown'**

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▶ **'He even smells good!' Zac Efron is 'the nicest celebrity ever' says Dubbo motel worker**

▶ **who met him and girlfriend Vanessa Valladares**

▶ **9-1-1: Lone Star actor Ronen Rubinstein comes out as bisexual after being inspired by the gay character he plays on the series**

▶ **Jorge Lendeborg Jr. and Tosin Cole are in talks to star in New Line's House Party reboot with LeBron James producing**

▶ **Rami Malek parties shirtless in sunny Miami Beach as girlfriend Lucy Boynton films across the pond in cold and rainy Liverpool**

▶ **Jennifer Lopez reveals who gave her the J.Lo nickname 20 YEARS ago when she came out with hit songs like Love Don't Cost A Thing**

▶ **Don Johnson, 71, confirms he's in 'heavy prep' for Nash Bridges reboot with co-star Cheech Marin**

▶ **Justin Theroux unveils trailer for his new AppleTV+ seven-episode series The Mosquito Coast**

▶ **Dolly Parton mourns late uncle Bill Owens: 'I knew my heart would break when he passed and it did'**

▶ **Gavin Rossdale rocks long hair as he takes son Apollo, seven, for frozen yogurt before they take their Pomeranian Chewy out for walk**

▶ **Hailey Bieber was 'so upset' to learn she had not been nice to restaurant hostess who rated the model poorly in viral video: 'I wish I didn't act that way'**

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▶ **Margot Robbie, 30, breaks down the diet that keeps her slim as she prepares to play Barbie... and there are NO sweets or bread in the mix**

Dave Chapelle reveals CELEBRITIES at White House farewell party for Obama wrote the 'dirty notes' Trump staff found in drawers and

▶ **cupboards when they moved in**

▶ **New mom Karlie Kloss to make 'guest appearances' in 'reimagined' host role on season 19 of Project Runway... as Bravo reveals filming to begin soon**

▶ **Game of Thrones releases trailer for controversial final season ahead of the show's 10th anniversary celebration... and fans are not happy**

▶ **Katherine Webb-McCarron gives birth to a baby boy with husband AJ by her side: 'Welcome to the world!'**
Newborn has been named Gunnar Cruz

▶ **Kelly Osbourne and Vegas showman Jeff Beacher join forces for a brand new podcast with wild, live theater vibes**

Tiger Woods will receive NO citation despite going up to 87MPH in a 45mph zone before near-fatal crash

▶ **because 'nobody witnessed him speeding'**

▶ **The Rock flexes his incredibly muscular legs as he trains in the gym ahead of the DC Comics film Black Adam: 'Grateful for the grind'**

▶ **Mick Jagger's ballerina girlfriend Melanie Hamrick, 34, shows off her sizzling physique in a skimpy red swimsuit as she soaks up the sun**

▶ **Good Morning America's beloved animal expert Jack Hanna, 74, has been diagnosed with dementia and can 'no longer participate in public life', his family shares**

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▶ **KUWTK to end its 20-season run with EPIC reunion special featuring Kris, Kim, Khloé, Kourtney, Kendall, Kylie and Scott, hosted by Andy Cohen**

▶ **Kourtney Kardashian is flawless as she models a bra top designed by Kim... after un-retouched snap of Khloe calls family's photo doctoring practices into question**

▶ **Kendall Jenner flaunts her toned figure while on her way to a private Pilates session with pal Hailey Bieber**

The model, 25, wowed in a chocolate brown sports bra and leggings

▶ **Demi Rose leaves almost nothing to the imagination as she goes TOPLESS in a wrap skirt for sizzling new shoot**

The model, 25, put on a jaw-dropping display

▶ **Mom star Allison Janney, 61, reveals she is 'fine' with not having children as she confirms she is single after splitting from Philip Joncas**

▶ **Lisa Rinna comments on her 19-year-old daughter Amelia's romance with Scott Disick, 37, for the first time with funny jab of their shared love of hats**

Brad Paisley, 48, and Kimberly Williams-Paisley, 49, reveal the key to their 18-year marriage: 'focusing on the laughter and

▶ **keeping a sense of play'**

▶ **Matthew Perry, 51, and fiancée Molly Hurwitz, 29, are seen together for first time since their engagement announcement**

▶ **Chinese government keeps a secret watchlist on 700 Americans including singer Ashanti after they traveled through Shanghai airport, cybersecurity group claims**

▶ **Will the Academy Awards be a 'who cares' moment as ratings dive? Oscars critics question who will tune for the unique ceremony amid COVID-19**

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▶ **Serena Williams, 39, and her mini-me daughter, three, pose in matching swimsuits: 'The Shady One and the Wild Child, together they're unstoppable'**

▶ **Tom Brady gushes over wife Gisele Bundchen and credits her for 'sacrifices' in keeping marriage strong and raising kids: 'She brings out the best version of me'**

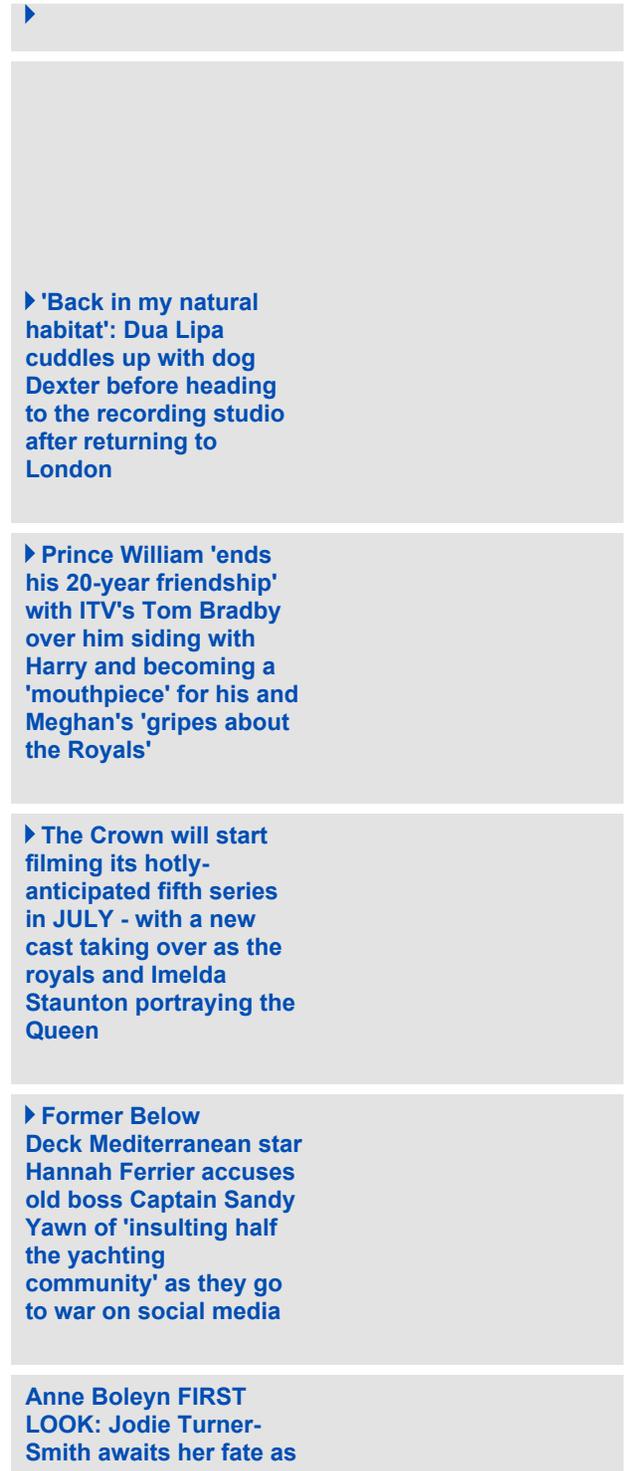
▶ **FKA twigs shows off her flexible moves during dance practice after claiming it was a 'big relief' to speak out against Shia LaBeouf amid abuse allegations**

▶ **Never mind the bike locks, here's Vivienne Westwood! Punk fashion icon wraps up warm as she pedals along chilly London streets**

▶ **Inauguration star Amanda Gorman becomes first poet to land cover of Vogue - and reveals she has turned down \$17 MILLION worth of deals since signing with IMG**

▶ **Is this why Regé-Jean Page walked away from \$55k per Bridgerton episode? ALISON BOSHOFF reveals the ultimate plot twist**

Singer Ava Max shows off some underboob in tiny blue patterned bikini as she shares a slew of sexy snaps from Miami trip



▶ **Henry VIII's doomed second wife in teaser for thrilling series - after becoming the first black actress to play the role**

▶ **Nick Lachey and wife Vanessa soak up the sunshine at the beach during their fun-filled family trip to Cabo San Lucas**

▶ **Sylvester Stallone reveals he will NOT return as Rocky in Creed III directed by Michael B. Jordan... despite reprising role for first two parts**

▶ **Molly Sims, 47, looks sensational as she dances in a BIKINI to an Addison Rae song while sipping wine during her vacation in Mexico**

▶ **Kim Kardashian shares cute snaps of son Saint with daughter of BFF Tracy Romulus... after being named billionaire**

Addison Rae, 20, admits she's a 'hopeless romantic' but is focused

▶ on work ahead of He's All That premiere ... and reveals 'obsession' with Justin Bieber

▶ iHeartRadio Music Award nominations spark outrage after recognizing Dr. Luke for Producer Of The Year... after he quietly earned a Grammy nod under the moniker Tyson Trax

▶ Lala Kent and her fiance Randall Emmett keep it very casual as they step out for dinner in West Hollywood just weeks after welcoming their baby

▶ JoJo Siwa, 17, reflects on coming out as LGBTQ and reveals she now identifies as pansexual: 'The first time that I've felt so personally happy'

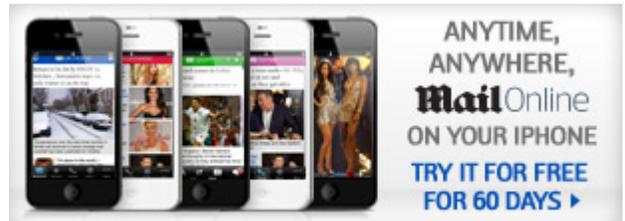
EXCLUSIVE 'She asked me to marry her as a first question:' Too Hot To Handle's Francesca Farago details her whirlwind romance with girlfriend Demi Sims

▶ **Megan Thee Stallion leads iHeartRadio Music Awards nominees with eight nods... with Roddy Ricch and The Weeknd close behind**

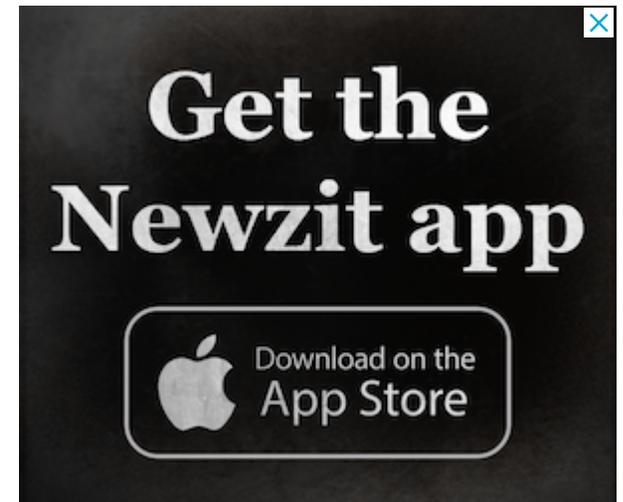
▶ **Henry Golding looks like quite the proud papa as he and wife Liv Lo take their newborn baby for a stroll**

Henry was handsome as ever, rocking a black leather jacket

▶ **Real Housewives Of Atlanta alum Claudia Jordan apologizes for mistakenly tweeting DMX was dead... as rapper remains in intensive care following heart attack**



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GADGET REVIEWS

▶ iPad Pro review: Apple takes the tablet to new heights (at a price)

Apple's new iPad is blazingly fast, gorgeous to look at, and quite simply the best tablet out there - and for a lot of people, probably the best computer out there.



▶ The small smart display with big potential: Google Home Hub review

Google is late to the game with its Home Hub, but the low price and AI features make it a great choice for controlling your home, showing pictures and even helping run your life.



▶ 'Good enough for most people': iPhone XR review

On one hand, the XR lacks the high-resolution screen and dual-lens camera on the XS. but it is \$250 cheaper and still



get most of the other cutting-edge features found on the more expensive model.

► **The Pixel 3 outsmarts the iPhone (IF you trust Google with all your information)**

AI seems to permeate every part of its software, from the ability to answer calls for you to being able to almost perfectly predict your morning commute.



► **Bigger and better in every way: Apple's XS really does take the iPhone to the Max**

Apple's new iPhone XS and XS Max go on sale on Friday - and the biggest handset Apple has ever made is also its best (and possibly unsurprisingly, its most expensive).



► **The \$250 beauty device that works like 'Photoshop for your face'**

Israeli beauty-tech firm Pollogen has launched its Geneo Personal device, which stimulates oxygen from beneath the skin's surface to give you a clearer, fresher face within minutes.



► **iOS 12 review: The update that really will improve your iPhone**

Rather than cram in a plethora of new features, Apple's latest update is about boosting stability, with improvements in everything from FaceID and battery life.



▶ **Naim Atom: The hifi that will change the way you listen to music**

It's eye-wateringly expensive at \$2,999, but Naim's Uniti Atom is a revelation, an integrated amplifier that makes it easy to stream music at a quality you've probably never heard before.



▶ **The \$1,000 wireless speaker that really IS worth the price: Naim Mu-so Qb review**

Naim's incredible Mu-So Qb takes you back to the good old days - where the music captivates and entralls, rather than simply being something in the background.



▶ **The hi-tech \$2,000 spin bike that really could change your life**

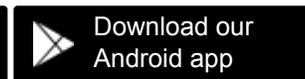
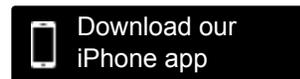
Peloton's hi-tech bike lets you stream live and on demand rides to your home - and it's one of the best examples of fitness technology out there - at a price.



▶ **The best all in one wireless speaker you'll ever hear: Naim Mu-so review**

It might not be a name familiar to the US market, but Naim is a legendary British brand hoping to make a splash with the American launch of its \$1499 Mu:So speaker.





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