

# SHAPE

## Yes, TikTok's "Cortisol Face" Is Really a Thing

Stress can wreak havoc on your skin and hormones, but can it really change the shape of your face? Experts weigh in.

By [Rachel MacPherson, BA, CPT](#) | October 2, 2024



Every day, a new health concern seems to make the rounds on TikTok, with the inevitable "solutions" doled out by influencers and the medical community alike. [Stress](#) has increasingly been blamed for skin issues, such as thinning, fine lines, and dullness. Recently, the complaint of "cortisol face"—a puffy face attributed to high stress levels—has been prevalent.

### Is There Science to Support Cortisol Face?

Actual cortisol face or moon face is a symptom of a medical condition. Chronically increased cortisol levels can create puffiness and potentially change the shape of the face.

"There are several things other than cortisol that can make us feel swollen and puffy—alcohol, a high sodium diet, not [sleeping](#), or general stress as a whole," says [Paul Jarrod Frank, MD](#), a board-certified dermatologist, and founder of [PFRANKMD](#). "It's not one particular thing, and certainly, cortisol isn't the only thing to blame when our faces feel round and puffy."

### What You Can Do About Cortisol Face

#### Sleep Quality

Stress, skin, and overall health are interconnected and while cortisol face is not a medically-recognized condition, there is a legitimate link between stress and skin issues. Addressing any lifestyle factors that cause you to feel less chill and sticking to a solid skincare routine can help manage and improve those pesky stress lines and breakouts you might be battling.

As [Dr. Frank](#) succinctly puts it: "Eat well, sleep well, meditate, exercise—do things that [decrease your stress](#)."