

Hand Protection for Hand Dermatitis

Hand dermatitis (hand eczema is another more for the same thing) is common. Hand rashes usually result from a combination of (1) sensitive skin and (2) irritation or allergy materials touched. Everyone's hands routinely touch irritating soaps and detergents several times a day. Add the raw foods, solvents, paints, oils, greases, acids, glues and so on that most of us touch at work or in the home, and you can see that the skin of your hands takes a beating.

Not everyone gets hand dermatitis. Many lucky persons have "tough" skin, but unfortunately some persons have skin that's easily damaged. The result is dermatitis. Persons with hand dermatitis often have dermatitis elsewhere, and frequently blood relatives have hand dermatitis.

Skin protection is an important part of treatment. This instruction sheet gives you detailed directions on how to protect your hands. Please read carefully everyday for a week to fix these instructions in your mind.

Protect your hands from direct contact with soaps, detergents, scouring powders and similar irritating chemicals by wearing waterproof, heavy-duty vinyl gloves. Heavy-duty vinyl gloves are better than rubber gloves, since you may become allergic to rubber. Have gloves conveniently located in the kitchen, bathroom and laundry areas. If a glove develops a hole, discard it immediately! Wearing a glove with a hole is worse than wearing no gloves at all.

Waterproof, heavy-duty vinyl gloves are unlined. Washable Cotton Gloves may be purchased along with the vinyl gloves and used as an absorbent liner under them. You should have enough waterproof gloves so the insides of the gloves can dry between wearing.

Wear waterproof gloves while peeling and squeezing lemons, oranges, or grapefruits, peeling potatoes, and handling tomatoes.

Wear leather or heavy-duty fabric gloves when doing dry work and gardening. Dirty your gloves-not your hands. If you keep house for your family, scatter a dozen pairs of cheap Cotton Gloves about your house and use them while doing dry housework. When they get dirty, put them in the washing machine. Wash your gloves -- not your hands.

If you have an automatic dishwasher, use it as much as possible. If you don't, let a member of your family do the dishes. Do your laundry by machine, not by hand.

Avoid direct contact with turpentine, paint thinner, paints, and floor, furniture, metal and shoe polishes. They contain irritating solvents.

When washing your hands, use lukewarm water and very little mild soap. Rinse the soap off carefully and dry gently. All soaps are irritating. No soap is "gentle to your skin" except in the minds of advertising writers - so don't waste your money on special soaps or "soap-free" cleansers.

Rings often worsen dermatitis by trapping irritating materials beneath them. Remove your rings when doing housework and before washing your hands.

When outdoors in cold or windy weather, wear unlined leather gloves to protect your hands from drying and chapping.

Use only the prescribed medicines and lubricants. Do not use other lotions, creams, or medications. They may irritate your skin.

Protect your hands for at least four months after your dermatitis has healed. It takes a long time for skin to recover and unless you're careful the dermatitis may recur.

There is no fast "magic" treatment for hand dermatitis. Your skin must be given a rest from irritants. Follow these instructions carefully.