

FACT SHEET: CARING FOR YOUR HANDS POST HAND DERMATITIS

Avoiding physical and chemical injuries, contact with sensitising (allergenic) and irritating agents – these are factors critical in the healing and prevention of skin conditions of the fingers, nails and hands.

HOUSEWORK

Avoid wet work for a period of about six weeks to allow for healing.

In the Kitchen

- Wear plastic gloves to protect your hands when washing utensils. Be careful not to wet the inside of the gloves
- Cotton gloves should be worn under the plastic gloves to avoid any irritation caused by sweating
- Do not wear gloves for longer than 20 minutes. Use a hand moisturiser recommended by your doctor if you are exposed to excessive washing
- Use long-handled brushes and sponges, and soak cooking utensils in water and detergent for a while to make cleaning easy

Doing Laundry

- Use a washing machine whenever possible
- Do not handle detergents with bare fingers. Use gloves when handling dirty diapers
- Avoid direct contact with diaper soaking liquid, use a pair of long-handled tongs instead
- Use plastic gloves with inner cotton gloves when handwashing clothes

Household cleaning

- Avoid direct contact with household cleaners with your bare hands, e.g. always wear gloves when squeezing floor mops or scrubbing
- Wear cotton gloves when doing dry housework, including dusting

FOOD AND COOKING

- Avoid eating with your fingers. Always handle food with forks, spoons, knives or chopsticks
- While preparing food, avoid handling seafood, raw meat, chilli, onion, garlic, vegetables and fruits with bare hands. Get help in cutting these raw foods or use plastic food handling gloves without powder
- Do not marinate food with bare hands. Use a pair of wooden spoons instead



WASHING HANDS

- Use non-soap washes. Do not use medicated soap
- Frequent hand washing is discouraged as excess washing may damage the skin barrier
- Use a moisturizing lotion or cream after washing your hands

RECREATION

- Use appropriate cotton and/or gardening gloves when doing gardening, including spraying plants. Avoid any injuries during gardening as any cuts may open the skin for bacterial infection
- Swimming in chlorinated water may contribute to dryness and irritation
- Friction from sports equipment may aggravate the condition. Use proper sports gloves and moisturisers when you need to handle sports equipment

INJURIES AND INFECTIONS

- Avoid injuries and cuts at work or at play, as any open wound would encourage bacterial, viral and even fungal infection
- Do not tear or peel off scab formed on cuts or wounds, as it would expose raw flesh. Scab should be gently trimmed with a pair of clean sharp scissors
- Be careful when cutting nails and avoid cutting too close to the fingertip

MEDICATION

- Use the topical creams prescribed as directed and after washing hands. It is safe to handle your baby after applying the creams as the creams do not have any harmful effect

Develop a habit of caring for your hands, and you will soon have a fine pair of hands. Do remember that early effective treatment is important for managing hand conditions, as healing can take a long time.

Prevention is better than cure. Your hands are important and you should give them all the care they deserve.