

General hand care

To speed healing and prevent relapse of your dermatitis you should remember:

- When hand washing, use luke warm water and a gentle skin cleanser without perfume or tar. Rinse thoroughly under running water. Dry carefully with a clean towel, not forgetting to dry between the fingers
- Use an emollient of your choice on a regular basis after hand washing (non-scented)
- As much as possible avoid contact with detergents and other strong cleansing agents. Measure the quantity according to manufacturers directions; otherwise they may be too strong. Keep the packages clean to avoid irritation from detergents on the outside
- Avoid direct contact with shampoo. Let someone shampoo your hair or use plastic gloves
- Avoid direct contact with metal, wax, shoe, floor, furniture and window polishes
- Be careful not to get solvents such as white spirit, petrol, trichloroethylene, turpentine and thinners on the skin
- Do not peel or squeeze oranges, lemons or grapefruit with bare hands
- Do not apply hair lotion, hair cream or hair dye with bare hands
- Wear gloves in cold weather

- Rings should not be worn during housework or other work, even when the eczema has healed. Rings should be cleaned frequently on the inside with a brush and left in ammonia water overnight then rinsed thoroughly. Never wash your hands with soap when wearing rings
- For washing use running water if possible
- If gloves are used for washing dishes and clothes, they should be plastic and not rubber since rubber often causes eczema. Gloves should not be worn for more than 15 to 20 minutes at a time. If water happens to get inside the glove it must be taken off immediately. Turn the glove inside out and rinse them under the hot tap several times a week. They should only be worn a few times before being washed. Buy several pairs of gloves at a time
- Remember it can take several months for the skin to recover completely from an episode of dermatitis, so even if it looks normal it is still vulnerable. Try to find time to look after your skin and treat it with respect, it's got to last you a lifetime
- A good skin routine is essential in the management of hand eczema. Use plenty of moisturiser and re-apply them frequently (e.g during tea breaks, whilst watching television and before going to sleep at night)

If you require this document in another language, large print, braille or audio version, please contact Patient Information on 01709 424281.

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