

## Hand Dermatitis

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For questions or an appointment, call (806)797-1202

### ✓ Facts...

- Not contagious
- Usually caused by a combination of sensitive skin and contact with irritants or allergens. (Examples are irritating soaps, raw foods, solvents, paints, oils, greases, acids, glues, etc.)
- Often episodic with periods of no symptoms
- Dyshidrosis – a form of hand dermatitis
  - Underlying cause unknown, but is probably caused from a dysfunction of the immune system in the skin of the hands
  - No cure for the condition, but there are several medications available to alleviate the symptoms
  - More susceptible to skin irritants

### ✓ Prevention...

- Protect your hands from direct contact with irritants listed above by wearing waterproof, heavy duty **vinyl** gloves. Vinyl gloves are better than rubber gloves since you may become allergic to rubber. **You can use cotton lined rubber gloves** unless your doctor says otherwise. They are usually available at paint and hardware stores. Buy four or five pairs so they can be conveniently located throughout the house and to allow drying time inside the glove between uses. Discard immediately if glove develops a hole. Wearing a glove with a hole is worse than wearing no gloves at all.
- Wear waterproof gloves while peeling and squeezing lemons, oranges, or grapefruit, peeling potatoes and handling onions or tomatoes.
- Wear leather or heavy-duty fabric gloves when doing work and gardening. Dirty your gloves and not your hands.
- Avoid the responsibility of washing dishes or laundry manually
- **Wash your hands as infrequently as possible.** Use lukewarm water and very little amount of a mild soap (Cetaphil, Aveeno, Dove).
- Moisturize after washing. It is **critically important and should be done on a regular basis**. Applications of Vaseline, Cetaphil cream, or Neutrogena Hand Cream should be applied throughout the day.

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- Rings (jewelry) often worsen dermatitis by trapping irritating materials beneath them, so remove them while doing housework and before washing hands.
- Wear unlined leather gloves when outdoors in cold or windy weather to protect hands from drying and chapping.

✓ **Instructions...**

- Use only the prescribed medicines and lubricants. Do **not** use other lotions, creams, or medications (such as Neosporin or other antibiotic ointments). They could further irritate the skin.
- The most important part of treatment is to apply cortisone medication to hands as directed. In most cases, apply the cortisone just to the part of the hand that is broken out. Moisturizers should be applied to the entire hand.
- Decrease use of steroid as condition improves.
- If dermatitis begins to occur again, resume steroid treatment. Don't wait until your hands get to their worst point before restarting the steroid.
- Steroids should not be used on a continual basis. Skin will develop a tolerance and will not respond as well. Giving rest periods between treatments can "trick" the skin into staying responsive to the cortisone. Rest periods will also minimize side effects such as thinning, fragility and persistent redness.