

# HAND ECZEMA

## What is hand eczema?

Hand eczema shows up as itchiness, redness, dryness and/or scaliness over the hands. This can be part of regular eczema or triggered by irritation or an allergy to things that you might touch. Common irritants are soap, detergent, bleach, disinfectant, shampoo, polishes, adhesives (glues) and solvents. Some foods and vegetable juices can also irritate the skin. Allergies that trigger hand eczema can come in many forms and can include metals like nickel, fragrance and preservatives in creams and chemicals in synthetic rubber.

Frequent hand washing is a common trigger for hand eczema.

## How can I prevent hand eczema?

Many substances around the home and in the workplace are irritating to the skin. These include dishwashing detergent, nail polish remover and certain foods (like garlic or the peels and juices of citrus fruits). Avoid touching these if you can, or wear vinyl (hypoallergenic) gloves when handling these substances.

During cold or windy weather, make sure you wear gloves when outdoors to prevent your skin from drying and chapping.

## How can I treat hand eczema?

Avoiding triggers and protecting the skin are the main things that will help prevent and treat hand eczema. Use a good moisturizing cream after hand washing and as frequently as possible (a minimum of 4 times a day). Avoid perfumed moisturizers, as perfume (fragrance) allergy is common.

Some examples of good hand moisturizers are Avène Cicalfate Hand, Bioderma Atoderm Mains, CeraVe Therapeutic Hand Cream, La Roche Posay Cicaplast Mains, Neutrogena Norwegian formula hand cream and Uriage - Bariéderm Fissures Cracks Ointment.

Cotton gloves are useful to wear after you have applied a thick layer of moisturizer. This will keep your skin moisturized, while keeping the things you touch free from mess. In severe cases, a topical corticosteroid can be used to help clear the rash.



## Tips on washing hands

When washing your hands, use a very mild fragrance-free soap and slightly warm water. Wet your hands before applying the soap. Use only a small amount of soap as even 'mild' products are still irritating to sensitive skin. Take your rings off before washing as soap can get trapped under them. . Make sure that you rinse your hands thoroughly if you use soap, and carefully dry your skin after washing. Pay particular attention to drying between your fingers. Always apply a moisturizer or fragrance-free hand cream afterwards.

Examples of good hand cleansers are Aveeno moisturizing bar, CeraVe Hydrating Cleanser and Bar, Cetaphil cleanser and Dove Sensitive Skin Beauty Bar.