

# THE DERMATOLOGY CENTER

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## Hand Dermatitis

Itchy, irritated skin on the hands may be due to exposure to irritants, allergic reactions, or an inborn tendency to sensitive skin (atopic dermatitis).

Some jobs may increase the risk of hand dermatitis – particularly when hands are continually damp or exposed to food products and cleansers.

### Management:

#### Identification of offending allergens or irritants

- Keep a diary to pinpoint trigger factors (certain chemicals, food products, hobbies using glues, wood, metals) as well as periods of improvement (example vacations, time away from housework)
- Allergy testing may help identify allergens – these are called Patch tests.

#### Reducing exposure to irritants

- Reduce wet work, exposure to cleaning solvents, direct handling of fruits, vegetable juice or pulp
- Avoid harsh soaps and detergents, hot water for cleansing
  - Use fragrance-free gentle cleansers (Syndet, Cetaphil, SpectroGel)
  - Lukewarm water for rinsing

#### Protection

- Use latex-free, vinyl or nitrile gloves – wear only for brief periods to avoid irritation from sweating under the gloves

#### Treatment

- Apply moisturizers frequently – after *every* hand washing (i.e. Cetaphil Hand Cream, Cera Ve Hand Cream, Gloves In a Bottle)
- Avoid soaps for washing, use gentle cleansers (i.e. Syndets, Cetaphil, Cera Ve, SpectroGel cleansers)
- Use lukewarm water for rinsing, never hot
- Use prescription medicated creams frequently as directed
- For severely affected areas, apply Band-Aids or gloves over treatment creams overnight
- Super glue can be used to close “cracks” on the fingers and hands.

While these tips will help to improve hand dermatitis, only complete avoidance of all irritants and allergens will cure it.