

# Patient Information for Hand dermatitis

## Overview

Hand dermatitis can be caused by irritants, allergies, frequent water exposure, or skin disease. Hand dermatitis may cause itching, swelling, or blisters. Without treatment, the skin may become thick, cracked, or scaly, and bleed.

Most of the time, hand dermatitis is caused by coming into contact with something that irritates the skin, such as chemicals, or contact with something that causes allergic reactions in some people, such as latex gloves or poison ivy. Work that requires keeping your hands wet can also irritate the skin of your palms.

## Who's At Risk

People whose jobs bring their hands into frequent contact with irritants, including:

- Agricultural workers
- Mechanics / automotive workers
- Health care professionals
- Food industry workers
- Janitors / cleaners
- Construction workers
- Painters
- Electricians
- Beauticians / hairdressers

The condition is more common among females.

## Signs & Symptoms

The symptoms can vary from person to person.

Commonly, the skin on the hands may be itchy, swollen, blistered, cracked, and/or scaly.

## Self-Care Guidelines

Avoid the environmental trigger that is causing the reaction. Wear gloves for work that involves chemicals or submerging your hands in water.

Regular use of moisturizer or petroleum jelly, especially after bathing and hand washing, can reduce irritation.

### **When to Seek Medical Care**

See your doctor if your hands are itchy, swollen, blistered, cracked, and/or scaly.

### **Treatments Your Physician May Prescribe**

If your skin problems are not solved by limiting exposure and using over-the-counter moisturizing products, your doctor may recommend prescription cream or ointment that contains corticosteroids.

Your doctor may recommend oral antihistamines to control itching.

Some patients benefit from exposure to ultraviolet light therapy.