



## TAKING CARE OF YOUR HANDS

As a healthcare worker there are many potential hazards in your workplace that can affect your skin and cause skin disease.

**About 20% of healthcare workers have hand dermatitis.**



### WHAT TO WATCH FOR

Hand dermatitis often starts as dry skin, but if the exposure continues and the skin is not treated, the dermatitis may progress to more serious and often painful outcomes such as:

- Very itchy or sore and burning skin
- Little water blisters called vesicles
- Scaling and cracks which may bleed

### WHAT CAUSES DERMATITIS

Irritant contact dermatitis is common, leading to four out of every five cases of occupational contact dermatitis. It is caused by physical agents or chemical substances that are irritating and damaging to the skin, typically because of repeated and prolonged contact. Common irritants are

- Cleaning agents
- Wet work like wearing gloves for more than a total of 2 hours per day, having your hands in water or liquid for more than 2 hours per day, or washing your hands more than 20 times a day

Hand dermatitis can also be caused by an allergic reaction which happens when a worker develops an allergy to a substance in the workplace. An allergy can develop quickly over a few weeks or after many years of exposure. Once an allergy develops, exposure to a small amount of allergen can result in a skin reaction. Some common occupational allergens include:

- Ingredients in protective gloves
- Preservatives and fragrances in environmental cleaning products
- Preservatives, fragrances or medical ingredients in skin care products and medications

## WHAT TO DO

You can take steps to protect your skin, here are some suggestions

- Follow proper workplace procedures
- If your workplace uses latex gloves, ask your employer if you can replace these with nitrile gloves
- Use soaps with non-irritating or allergenic properties
- Self-screen, look for signs such as a rash and get it checked out as soon as possible by a healthcare professional

## DO YOU WANT TO LEARN MORE?

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*We're looking for healthcare workers to participate in an online research study evaluating an e-module for occupational hand dermatitis.*

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Study Title: Occupational hand dermatitis in healthcare - Development and evaluation of an online learning and self-screening program

### PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to evaluate an online training module regarding best practices for early identification, management and prevention of occupational hand dermatitis, including self-screening among healthcare workers in Ontario.

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### TO PARTICIPATE

**Study recruitment and participation open soon!**

Participants will receive up to \$40 in gift cards for participating in the study