

Hand Dermatitis/ Hand Eczema

This is a skin rash which doesn't spread from one person to another

(1) What are the causes of hand dermatitis?

- Contact with chemicals and toxins that are harmful to skin (Irritant Contact Dermatitis)
e.g- Soap, Detergents
- Contact with substances that are allergic to skin (Allergic Contact Dermatitis)
- Inflammatory skin condition originating since childhood (Atopic Dermatitis)
- Increased frequency of hand washing and activities with exposure to water

(2) What are the occupations that predispose to hand dermatitis?

- Nurses, Dentist, Surgeons
- Florists, Beauticians
- Chefs, Cleaning staff
- Care givers
- Masons, Carpenters

(3) What are the symptoms of hand dermatitis?

- Skin redness, dryness, scaling and itching
- With exacerbation; blister formation, swelling, fissuring, weeping and bleeding of the skin
- Depending on the cause of hand dermatitis; different parts of the hand can get involved
e.g- Finger webs, palm, tips of fingers, back of the hand

(4) What are the available treatment options?

- Creams which protect the hydration of the skin (Moisturizers)
- Tablets which reduce itching (Antihistamines)
- Condy's solution
It helps to dry out blisters, reduce weeping and prevent bacterial infections
- Steroid cream and ointment
Steroid creams are available in different potencies
Seek medical advice on the amount, area of the body and duration of the steroid cream to be applied
Inadequate use of steroid creams will result in treatment failure and overuse will give rise to side effects
- Calcineurin Inhibitors
Tacrolimus ointment



Pimecrolimus cream or ointment

- Phototherapy
- If not responding to the above treatments; oral tablets can be used

Oral steroids (Prednisolone)

Azathioprine

Ciclosporin

Methotrexate

These medications should only be taken with medical advice. Periodic blood testing is mandatory.

(5) What precautions can be taken to minimize hand dermatitis?

- Keep your hands clean.
- Cut your nails short.
- If the hand dermatitis occurs following exposure to a known allergen, avoid that allergen. Even a minute exposure to a known allergen will exacerbate the skin rash.
- Instead of strong soaps or detergents, use baby soaps or soap substitutes (Aqueous cream).
- Avoid touching fertilizers, soils or grass with bare hands during gardening
- During cooking, use a spoon to add spices and chilli powder.
- Avoid touching lime juice, fruit juice, polish and paint with bare hands.
- Wear gloves only for a limited period of time, as collection of sweat can exacerbate the skin rash. Use clean, dry and pore-less gloves. Rubber gloves are preferred over PVC gloves. Wearing a pair of cotton gloves inside rubber or PVC gloves will minimize sweating.
- Remove rings, bangles and wrist watch prior to washing clothes, cooking and cleaning.
- Avoid prolonged and repeated contact with water.
- Dryness of hands can be reduced by applying moisturizer creams. Always apply moisturizer cream, whenever your hands are dry or after washing your hands.

