



Hand Eczema

Hand eczema is due to moisture loss which damages the skin's outer layer and may result in red, cracked, dry, itchy skin. Occasionally blisters or swelling may occur. It may take months to heal and may become chronic. Hand eczema generally occurs when sensitive skin becomes exposed to irritants. Factors include frequent hand washing, use of irritating household products, frequent contact with water, and certain occupations which require exposure to chemicals. Persons with a history of childhood eczema are more commonly affected with hand eczema.

Treatment Recommendations Include:

1. Decrease hand washing.
2. Cleansers: Use soap-free, or fragrance-free gentle cleansers (Cetaphil cleanser, fragrance-free Dove, etc.)
3. Avoid hot water.
4. Gloves: Use cotton glove liners (purchase at grocery or drug store) under vinyl gloves when contact with detergents and chemicals or prolonged exposure to water is unavoidable.
5. Moisturizers: Apply a moisturizer to hands after each hand washing and any time that your hands are dry.
 - Ointment based products are the most moisturizing, the least irritating, but the messiest. Examples include Vaseline, SBR Lipocream, and Neutrogena hand cream.
 - Creams (fragrance-free) are also good moisturizers and include Cetaphil, Eucerin, DML Forte, and Moisturel cream. Vanicream is free of most irritants and is a good choice for very sensitive skin. Your pharmacist can order it for you.
 - Lotions are the least moisturizing, but are suitable if you have mild dermatitis or when your dermatitis is doing well. Pick a fragrance free product such as Cetaphil, Vanicream lotion, etc.
6. Prescription products:
 - Topical steroids: Use the strong topical steroid _____ ointment/cream twice a day for a few weeks. When the rash is improved significantly, you should switch to a milder steroid _____ ointment/cream. Taper off all of the steroid creams when doing well. *(Steroid creams, particularly the stronger ones may thin the skin with prolonged use for many months. In addition, steroids don't work as well if*

used continually.) If the rash recurs at a later date, the creams may be used again.

- Antihistamines: For itching, an antihistamine _____ may be prescribed. Most of these may make you sleepy and should be used at bedtime or when you plan to be at home.

For Questions or Emergency Care:

Call the office at **601-815-3374**. You may need to speak with the doctor on-call.