KERRY SKIN CLINIC
SKIN, HAIR + NAILS SPECIALISTS

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Hand care tips for hand eczema and dermatitis

1. Constantly moisturise your hands at least five or ten times a day with a "safe" greasy moisturiser as recommended by Dr Buckley (e.g. emulsifying ointment or Neutrogena Hand Cream, unscented). Avoid any other cosmetic moisturisers on sensitive hands.
2. Keep your hands dry at all times by the careful use of gloves. Before wet work moisturise your hands with your recommended moisturiser and put on a pair of light cotton gloves (e.g. Seton Gloves) followed by a pair of domestic rubber or PVC gloves for housework or industrial gloves for heavy work. Take a break every 15 minutes, remove the gloves and moisturise again. Cotton gloves by themselves are suitable for "dry" work around the house such as hoovering, polishing etc. Surgical latex gloves may be more suitable for delicate wet work.
3. Avoid direct hand contact with soaps, shampoos, washing up liquids and detergents. Use a washing machine and dishwasher if at all possible.
4. Avoid hand washing. Get your gloves dirty, not your hands. If you have to wash your hands (e.g. after going to the toilet) never use soap. Use a recommended soap substitute such as Emulave Wash with lukewarm water. Then dry your hands carefully and moisturise immediately with your recommended moisturiser. These soap substitutes can also be used in the bath or shower by placing a small amount on a sponge to clear the skin. Use an electric razor instead of wet shaving.
5. Use a detergent free shampoo such as "Emulave shampoo" or else wear surgical gloves when washing your hair.
6. Rings should only be work for special occasions, never during work. Avoid cheap jewellery (18 carat gold, solid silver or stainless steel are safe).
7. Buy plenty of gloves and hand moisturisers and place them in strategic places around the home and at work so that you don't have to go looking for them every time you need them e.g. in the bathroom, kitchen, garage, car and at work.
8. It may take many months for your hands to recover. Even after recovery you will still have to take great care of your hands to prevent relapse.
9. Pain, oozing, crusting or a sudden deterioration of your hand eczema/dermatitis may indicate that your skin has become infected. Check with Dr Buckley, as you may need antibiotic tablets.

For more information:

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