

General Hand Care Instructions Staff Handout

Maintaining intact skin on hands is important to protect you and the patient from infections. Protecting hands from chemicals and extreme conditions is important at home and work.

Care for hands is a 24 hour/7 day a week commitment:

1. At work, use alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR) for hand hygiene when hands are not visibly soiled. Many studies have shown ABHR is better tolerated than soap and water.
2. When washing hands use lukewarm water and unscented irritant-free soap or hand cleanser.
3. Remove rings when cleaning hands as cleaning product can be caught under rings, which can cause dermatitis to flare.
4. Rinse hands thoroughly and pat dry.
5. Protective gloves should be intact, clean and dry inside. Hands must be clean and dry when donning gloves.
6. Apply fragrance-free, non-irritating moisturizing cream dispensed in a bottle to hands frequently.
 - It is important to use a protective hand lotion/cream frequently during your work and at home to protect your hands from irritation caused by any of the factors listed. The lotion must be compatible with the gloves, hand rub and hand washing soap used.
7. Avoid skin contact with detergents, strong cleaning agents, various waxes and polishes, solvents and thinners as chemicals on skin can cause reactions.
8. Don't apply hair lotion, cream, gels or dyes with bare hands.
9. Continue hand protection (use of protective gloves or frequent moisturizer) for all gardening, cooking, dishwashing, cleaning, bathing and childcare duties. Often products used at home can cause or aggravate a condition.
10. Protect your hands from the cold and any time there is low relative humidity. Wear warm mitts or gloves at all times when in the cold. Even one minute of unprotected cold exposure may dry out hands. Be sure to wear gloves/mitts when handling a cold steering wheel.
11. Avoid contact with irritants and allergens.

Adapted from *Just Clean Your Hands* Hand Care Program, Public Health Ontario.