

# Hand care

**i** **Information for patients**  
Dermatology



**PROUD TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

SHEFFIELD TEACHING HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST



# Advice on how to care for your hands

This leaflet will give you general advice on how to care for your hands.

## How should I wash my hands during the COVID pandemic?

- Wash with an unscented (plain) soap for 20 seconds as per COVID-19 government advice.
- Re-wash hands with a plain emollient soap substitute. This removes irritant soap residue and helps repair the skin.
- Luke warm water is best.
- Dry your hands fully: pat, do not rub
- Moisturise generously afterwards and frequently throughout the day and overnight.

## When should I wear gloves?

When doing:

- Wet work, household jobs (e.g. cleaning, washing-up), gardening, dirty work, activities and occupations where gloves are specifically advised.

When handling:

- Potentially infectious material.
- Detergents including shampoo and washing up liquid.
- Chemicals including paints, acrylates, polishes, and solvents such as petrol.
- Raw foods, especially onions, garlic, tomatoes, potatoes, citrus fruit and raw chicken.
- Hair products especially hair dye. Wear vinyl or nitrile gloves.

## **How should I use gloves?**

- Wear nitrile or vinyl (PVC, polyvinyl chloride) gloves if possible as rubber (latex) can irritate.
- If gloves irritate use cotton lined gloves or wear cotton gloves inside the ones that irritate.
- Don't wear your gloves for more than 15-20 minutes if possible (they get sweaty and this may irritate).
- Remove and replace gloves if water or chemicals get inside, or if damaged.
- Regularly rinse with hot water then dry the inside of multi-use glove.
- Use the right glove for the job as advised for specific situations and chemicals.

## **Are there other ways I can care for my hands?**

- Soap, moisture, dirt and other irritants can collect under rings. Keep the inside of rings clean and dry, and avoid wearing rings when handling irritants.
- Wear warm gloves in wet, windy or cold weather.
- Try cotton gloves over your moisturisers (emollients) especially at night.
- Greasy products moisturise better.
- Keep containers of detergents, chemicals, nail acrylates etc clean.

### **Please note:**

**Your hands are still at risk of dermatitis for at least 4 or 5 months after it has appeared to settle, so you need to continue good hand care long term.**

## Do I need any other treatment?

- If you have on-going severe hand dermatitis, see your GP or occupational health department.

## Where can I find out more about hand care and hand dermatitis?

There is information on the British Association of Dermatology website:

<https://www.bad.org.uk/for-the-public/patient-information-leaflets>

<https://www.skinhealthinfo.org.uk/statement-on-coronavirus-and-skin-disease-affecting-the-hands/>

### Caution:

**Skin protectants and emollients are flammable. Avoid naked flames and do not to smoke if you are using them regularly, especially if the protectants and emollients get on your clothes or bedding.**



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