



THE AUSTRALASIAN COLLEGE  
OF DERMATOLOGISTS

# GET HEALTHY HANDS *ASAP* DURING COVID-19

# A

## Avoid irritants

- Use gloves for any tasks where your hands become wet or you need to wash your hands frequently at work and at home, such as for food preparation and when doing the dishes. Change gloves immediately when they become wet from water or sweating, or wear some cotton gloves underneath.
- For food preparation, use disposable gloves, such as polyethylene (clear plastic) or vinyl (almost clear plastic)
- For light work at home, such as dusting, use cotton gloves that can be washed.
- For heavier work, such as gardening, use heavy duty fabric gloves. This will stop you having to wash your hands as often
- Have several pairs of gloves for washing and cleaning around the house where you need them, such as the kitchen, laundry and bathroom
- Always avoid skin contact with solvents which are harsh on the skin (eg acetone, kerosene, turps)
- Avoid POWDERED disposable latex gloves
- Dry hands well after washing (water is an irritant) with hand towel
- Some alcohol-based hand sanitisers are more irritating than others- you may have to find the one that suits you best



# S

## Soap Substitute (Soap free wash)

- Use alcohol-based hand sanitisers if your hands are not visibly soiled or contaminated to reduce excessive hand washing
- There is no restriction on the number of times that you can use this
- Soap substitutes (soap-free washes) are preferred for those with hand dermatitis as they are gentler on the skin as their pH is matched to the skin, whereas conventional soaps are alkaline
- Soap substitutes contain surfactants (synthetic detergents) and have nearly identical cleansing properties as normal soap.
- You can find these in the eczema section of the chemist



**Contributors:** Dr Celestine Wong, Dr Lena Ly, Dr Jennifer Cahill, Mr Austin Vo, Amanda Palmer, Dr Pooja Sharma, Dr Hope Dinh, Dr Bruce Tate, Dr Michelle Rodrigues and A/Prof Rosemary Nixon.

**March 2020 COVID-19 Taskforce: Healthy Hands for Health Care Workers**



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## Apply moisturisers

- Moisturise your hands! This is the most important step.
- Lotions are light in consistency and easy to use. However frequent applications are required.
- Creams and ointments are thicker and oilier. These formulations are best used for those with dry to very hands and for use overnight.
- Remember to apply moisturiser all over hands and between fingers
- Choose a fragrance-free product with as few ingredients as possible to avoid allergies
- If your hands are really dry, you can try using clean cotton gloves on top of your moisturiser at night (remove them if they cause sweating)



# P

## Prescription treatments

- If your hands are dry, red, cracked, bubbly and itchy, this could mean the start of contact dermatitis. Please consult your GP or dermatologist early to get on top of your eczema. Telehealth is now becoming an accessible option if you need to seek help.
- Prescription items are more effective than over the counter creams so use your prescribed topical treatment liberally and as instructed.
- Use of over-the-counter 1% hydrocortisone ointment is a good place to start
- Ointments are always preferred to creams as they are more moisturising to the skin



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