

Hand Eczema

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Hand Eczema

Hand eczema refers to any type of eczema that appears on the hands, usually affecting both of them. It is not contagious and is caused by factors such as allergic reactions, contact with irritants in the workplace, or is hereditary. Hand eczemas commonly affect people who have eczema elsewhere on their body. Hand eczemas may come and go in cycles of varying length including the length of time between outbreaks as well as the length of the duration of symptoms.

Hereditary Hand Eczema

If there is a hereditary predisposition to hand eczema then it takes less environmental irritation to bring about the condition. Individuals who do not have a genetic proclivity for eczema have a higher tolerance to irritants in the environment. Some professions put individuals in frequent contact with irritants which cause hand eczema. This type of hand eczema is sometimes referred to as 'occupational dermatitis.'

Common Hand Eczema

Hand eczema is particularly common in industries involving cleaning, catering, metalwork, hairdressing, healthcare and mechanical work. These professions involve contact with irritants including the latex in medical gloves, metals such as nickel found in jewelry, fragrances, cosmetics, skin creams, cleaning fluids, detergents, soaps, nail polish remover, solvents, paper towels, cement, oils, grease, the chemicals used for clothing manufacture, among others.

Additional precipitating factors for work-related hand eczema are repeated friction, wind, and cold, or the frequent hand-washing required by food service professions. Exposure to any of these irritating elements or abrasive activities erodes the protective layer of the skin and precipitates hand eczema.

Various Types of Hand Eczema

Different types of hand eczemas are manifested in a variety of ways. Allergic contact and irritant contact hand eczema usually affect the top of the hand, though the palms or both sides of the hand may be afflicted. This type of hand eczema is commonly seen as dry, chapped skin around the knuckles and tops of the fingers. When hand eczema is caused by a fungal infection, the symptoms include itchy blisters along the sides of the fingers. Contact with poisonous plants such as poison ivy, poison oak or poison sumac causes blistering and weeping. If the eczema is caused by jewelry the irritation may only appear under a ring. Hand eczema can also spread to other parts of the body, often the forearms or feet, particularly the insteps.

Anyone who has hand eczema must take care to protect and look after their skin. Even if the condition happened long in the past, their skin may still be vulnerable to irritation in certain jobs. When a specific allergy has been narrowed-down, contact with the causative material must be strictly avoided over the long-term in order to clear up the eczema and to prevent its return. There is no cure for hand eczema but preventative measures can go a long way toward freeing the individual from its symptoms.

Controlling Hand Eczema

Many measures can be taken to control hand eczema. These start with understanding the aggravating factors for each particular type of hand eczema. This must be followed-through with the preventative and proactive actions appropriate to handling those symptoms in order to achieve the long-term relief that is possible from this irritating skin disease.

A large percentage of Ultra Balm buyers use it to control and relieve hand eczema and keep using it even after the condition has abated, to keep their hands soft and smooth all year round.