

HAND CARE FOR WORKERS

Your hands are an important tool! It is therefore essential to protect them from potentially harmful substances at work. Often gloves are used to provide protection against these harmful substances but they can also cause skin problems.

A **good hand-care programme** is an essential part of ensuring that the barrier function of the skin is optimal. Important aspects of a good hand care program include: **personal hygiene, correct selection of hand cleansers, sanitisers, hand creams and barrier creams.**

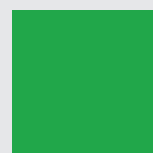
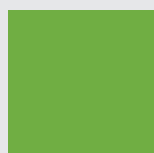
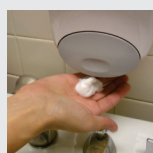
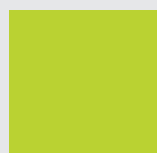
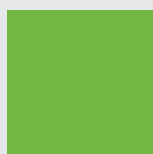
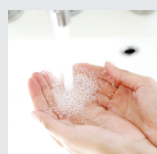


PERSONAL HYGIENE

- The importance of personal cleanliness in the prevention of dermatitis cannot be emphasized enough
- Ensure that you have easy access to hand washing facilities in the workplace
- Wash your hands before eating, drinking, smoking, using the rest room and importantly also before leaving the worksite
- Wash hands often as this will reduce the risk of chemicals penetrating through the skin into the body or accidentally being ingested
- Avoid using solvents, abrasives, acids, sand etc. to clean your hands at work as these will cause skin damage
- Apply a suitable hand cream after hands are washed

PERSONAL HYGIENE SPECIFIC FOR GLOVE USERS

- Wash and dry your hands thoroughly before putting on gloves, as glove material can be degraded by moisture
- If excessive sweating in gloves is a problem, cotton liners are a possible solution since it will help prevent the skin from being irritated by sweat and friction from the glove
- After spillages or splashes have contaminated your gloves, wash your hands and change gloves
- After removing your gloves, clean your hands with a good disinfectant or wash with a cleanser only if there is visible soiling
- Apply water based creams to hands after drying
- Only apply oil based creams at the end of a work session and at home as these increase absorption of the proteins found in the glove into the skin and can cause glove deterioration



CLEANSERS

Ensure that the cleansers at work do not cause skin irritation

IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS OF CLEANSERS:

- Must provide effective and quick removal of industrial soil
- Must not dehydrate or irritate the skin under normal applications
- Must provide protection against microbial contamination
- Soaps should be provided through dispensers
- Must flow easily from dispenser
- Least aggressive soap which will do the job should be used

SANITISERS - FOR HEALTHCARE WORKERS:

- Alcohol-based hand rubs are superior to conventional hand washing with water and soap
- They reduce the transmission of infections in hospitals and healthcare facilities
- They are also less irritating than soap and water
- Washing one's hands should be the exception, to be performed only when they are visibly soiled or contaminated
- In the health care environment, a colourless, fragrance or perfume-free alcohol-based waterless hand sanitiser should be used

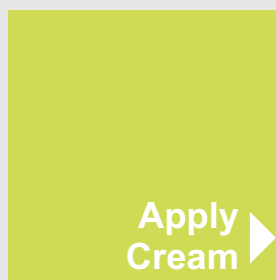
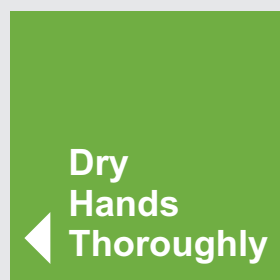
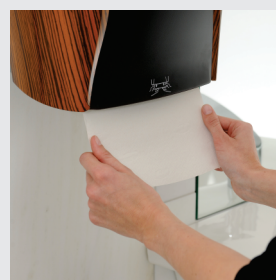
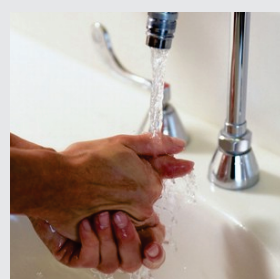
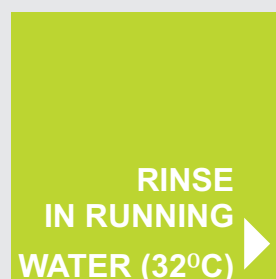
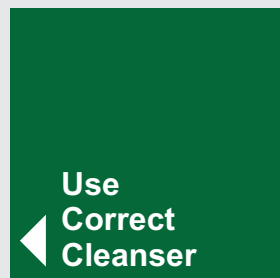
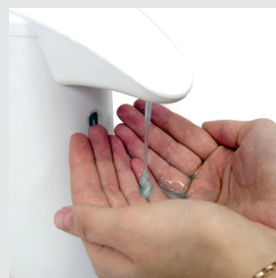
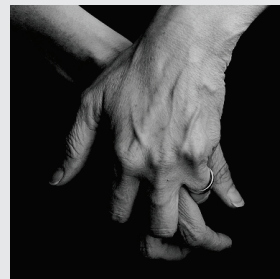
HAND CREAMS

- Use hand creams daily, to maintain a stable and healthy barrier layer and reduce penetration of harmful substances
- Use water based creams when using gloves frequently (as oil based emollients can increase absorption of the proteins from the gloves into the skin and can also cause glove deterioration)
- However, before and after work use oil based creams as they moisturise, lubricate and soothe dry skin by providing a lipid film on the surface, thereby reducing water loss and preventing the skin from drying
- They also replace natural oils which have been removed by soap, water or irritants

BARRIER CREAMS:

- Use when protective clothing is inadequate or not feasible
- Remember that barrier creams are considered the least effective way of protecting the skin but they do make removing soiling from the hands easier
- Ensure that the correct type of barrier cream is used - some protect against wet materials and some against dry materials e.g. water-repellent creams protect against acid, alkalis, soaps etc. while oil-repellent creams protect against oil, varnishes etc.

Remove
Soiling
Frequently ▶



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