

Hand Eczema

Barry D. Goldman, M.D.

Anna Krishtul, M.D.

What causes hand eczema?

Hand eczema is one of the most common conditions treated by dermatologists. Most cases are caused by excessive skin dryness and chronic irritation from soaps and detergents. Some cases can result from a true allergic reaction to chemicals or other substances to which patient is exposed to in his/her environment. People who have or once had atopic dermatitis are at a higher risk for developing hand eczema.

How to treat hand eczema?

Untreated hand eczema can become a chronic and disabling condition, interfering with daily activities. By following recommendations outlined below, you can significantly improve the way your hands look and feel.

- **Wear gloves** – Protect your hands from water and irritating chemicals when performing any chores such as washing dishes, cleaning, etc. Wear waterproof heavy-duty vinyl gloves. For added comfort, light cotton gloves may be worn underneath to absorb the sweat that can accumulate under vinyl gloves.

- **Use lukewarm water and a small amount of gentle fragrance-free soap or soap-free cleanser** – these are just some suggestions:
 - * CeraVe Hydrating Cleanser
 - * Cetaphil Gentle Skin Cleanser or Gentle Cleansing Bar
 - * Dove Deep Moisture Nourishing Hand Wash
 - * Dove Sensitive Skin Unscented Beauty Bar

- **Keep hands moisturized throughout the day** – Very important! Get into a habit of moisturizing your hands right after each hand washing. You can buy smaller travel-size containers of your favorite moisturizer to keep with you when on-the-go. When your hand eczema is at its worse, use a heavy ointment like Vaseline Petroleum Jelly because it traps the water better. You can enhance the effect by wearing light cotton gloves over the lubricated hands overnight. For milder hand eczema and for instances when a heavy ointment would interfere with your daytime activities, use a cream that is fragrance and lanolin-free. These are just some suggestions:
 - * Eucerin Dry Skin Therapy Calming Crème
 - * Cetaphil Therapeutic Hand Cream
 - * Aveeno Intense Relief Hand Cream
 - * CeraVe Moisturizing Cream

- **If your doctor prescribed a topical steroid medication, you should always apply it first, followed by a moisturizer.**

