



## HAND DERMATITIS IN HEALTH CARE WORKERS

**Definition:** Dry, cracked, red skin that is sometimes painful

### **Causes of Hand Dermatitis:**

Water: frequent, prolonged contact and/or hot water  
Harsh soaps  
Low humidity  
Cold Weather  
History of childhood eczema

### **Prevention:**

- Use warm **NOT** hot water to wash hands
- Use the least harsh soap available to you on your unit  
(VUMC has studied the products and tried to provide the mildest soap that meets health care standards)
- Use alcohol emollient gels when hands are not visibly soiled
- Use the water based moisturizers available on your unit
- Use non-latex gloves  
and
- Protect and treat the hands when away from the workplace
  1. At bedtime apply warm water to hands
  2. Pat hands gently with a soft towel, but do not completely dry
  3. \*Apply thin layer of Vaseline petroleum jelly
  4. Place thin cotton gloves over the petroleum jelly
  5. Sleep in this overnight and your hands will be much more resilient the next day

\* Petroleum products are not compatible with the use of gloves and some skin cleansers used in health care settings.