

Hand Eczema

Hand eczema (EHK sih mah) is a type of **eczema** - an itchy, red, dry skin condition - that appears on the hands. A form of hand eczema in which small, itchy blisters appear on the hands is called dyshidrotic eczema. (Read the Helping Hand HH-I-104, *Eczema*.)

Hand eczema can be chronic (last a long time) and hard to treat. It is more common in people who have a history of eczema on other parts of their bodies. Several months are often needed for healing. Hand eczema is common. It is not contagious (does not spread from person to person).

There are many causes of hand eczema. Some examples are:

- contact with harsh hand soaps or cleaning supplies
- allergic reactions
- immersing the hands in water for long periods of time.

Diagnosis and Treatment

Hand eczema is identified by visual exam by your child's doctor. It is treated by using moisturizers to protect the skin. Anti-inflammatory creams and ointments can reduce redness, swelling and itching.

What to Do at Home

To help prevent hand eczema:

- Wear rubber or latex gloves to protect hands from harsh soaps and detergents when washing the dishes or cleaning.
- Use lukewarm water and a small amount of mild soap when washing your hands.
- Apply prescribed medicated creams and ointments after washing. Then apply a moisturizer.
- Use a fragrance-free, gentle moisturizer during the day. Some examples are: Dove®, Aveeno®, CeraVe®, Cetaphil®, Eucerin® and Aquaphor®.
- Wear warm cotton gloves outside in cold weather to prevent dry, chapped skin.