

What is chronic hand eczema?

Hand eczema is an inflammatory skin disease that affects the fingers, fingertips, palms, back of the hand, and wrists.

Hand eczema is considered to be chronic when it:



Lasts more than **3 months**

OR



Returns **twice a year at least**

What are the signs and symptoms of chronic hand eczema?

These include:



Itchy blisters



Dry, chapped skin



Redness / rash



Flakes



Cracks

Be hands-on when it comes to chronic hand eczema



This brochure has been designed to help you gain a better understanding of chronic hand eczema, including what it is, what causes it, and who it affects. You will also be provided with some lifestyle tips that you can use to help manage your condition.

If you feel uncertain or have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out to your healthcare professional for further guidance.

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What causes chronic hand eczema?

It is often triggered when hands come into contact with an irritant or other environmental exposure.

Some examples include:



Soaps



Metals



Food products



Occupational exposure



Frequent hand washing



Cold and dry weather conditions



Environmental exposures (e.g., plants)

Who does it affect?

Chronic hand eczema can affect anyone; it is, however, more common in women and can be hereditary.

Individuals whose jobs require frequent exposure to water, chemicals, or irritants are at an increased risk of developing chronic hand eczema, such as:

- Healthcare workers
- Hairdressers
- Cleaners
- Food handlers (chefs, servers, bartenders, etc.)

Giving you a helping hand

Use these lifestyle tips to help you manage chronic hand eczema:

✓ What you should try to do



Protect your hands

- Wear cotton gloves as a liner under vinyl gloves when handling food products or other substances that can trigger a reaction
- Wear vinyl gloves when washing and styling hair
- You should also take off any rings before working with water or hand washing



Use emollients/moisturizers

- Skin creams, lotions, and ointments can help restore normal skin barrier function and should be used after washing and whenever the skin dries out



Keep fingernails clean and short to reduce the effects of scratching



Use warm, not hot, water when bathing or showering

- This can help you avoid over-drying the skin



Manage stress

- Since stress can trigger flare-ups, try to use strategies to help you relax, such as meditation, taking a walk, or doing an activity you enjoy

✗ What you should try to avoid



Contact with triggers

- While this may be difficult if these substances are encountered at work, try to minimize your contact with them
- Avoid excessive hand washing



Scratching

- This can worsen the condition and lead to cracks in the skin, making it easier for bacteria to cause an infection
- To reduce itch, apply a cold compress



Hot and/or dry conditions

- Excessive sweating and dry conditions can trigger a skin reaction

Guidance from your healthcare team

Talk to your healthcare professional about prescription medications

Your healthcare professional can guide you through the treatment options available and devise a plan that's right for you.

Use the space below to record any recommendations provided to you by your healthcare professional, and to keep track of questions you may have for them.

