EXPRESS YOURSELF.

A GUIDE TO NAVIGATING CHRONIC HAND ECZEMA.

GO ›

Chronic Hand Eczema is eczema on your hands and wrists that hasn't gone away for over 3 months, or that happens at least 2 times in a year.[1] Chronic Hand Eczema can only be diagnosed by a healthcare professional.

This is a fictional patient. For illustrative purposes only.

*This booklet is for you if you think you might have, or if you have been diagnosed with, **Chronic Hand Eczema.***
Words that are underlined are explained in a glossary at the end.

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WHAT IS CHRONIC HAND ECZEMA?

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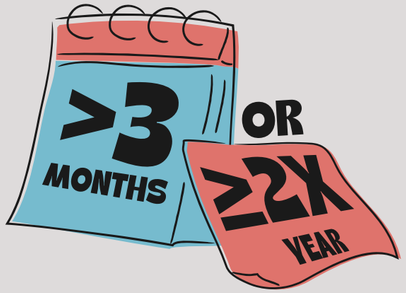
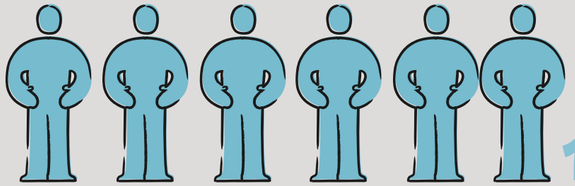
WHAT IS CHRONIC HAND ECZEMA?

Chronic Hand Eczema is eczema on hands and wrists that...[1]



...HASN'T GONE AWAY FOR OVER 3 MONTHS, OR THAT HAPPENS AT LEAST 2 TIMES IN A YEAR

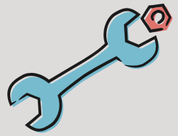
Around 6% of people might have Chronic Hand Eczema in Canada.*[2]



THAT'S AROUND 6 IN EVERY 100 PEOPLE

You might have a higher chance of having hand eczema if you work as a:[1,3,4]

HAIRDRESSER



MECHANIC

CLEANER

HEALTHCARE WORKER

METAL OR CONSTRUCTION WORKER

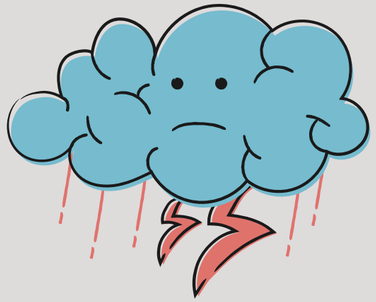
BEAUTY THERAPIST

Chronic Hand Eczema can be triggered by things like **irritants** or **allergens** that you might come across in these or similar lines of work. But it can also be triggered by some hobbies or everyday activities like housework.[1,3]

So you can have Chronic Hand Eczema even if you don't work in one of these jobs.[3]

Symptoms can include itch and pain, and skin can look red and flaky.[5] But the impact of Chronic Hand Eczema can be more than just physical.[5,6]

People may face:



EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL HEALTH EFFECTS,[7–9] AND SOME HAVE HAD TO MAKE CHANGES TO THEIR LIFESTYLE, WORK OR DAILY ACTIVITIES[6,10]

*A study called 'CHECK' looked at people between 18 and 69 years old from Canada, Germany, France, Italy, Spain, and the UK and asked them to complete an online survey. 60,131 people completed the survey and 4.7% of them (2847 people) had Chronic Hand Eczema diagnosed by a doctor.[2] CHECK, Chronic Hand Eczema epidemiology, Care, and Knowledge of real-life burden.

HOW TO TELL IF IT COULD BE CHRONIC HAND ECZEMA

Hands are not meant to feel constantly itchy and painful. But for people living with Chronic Hand Eczema, it can be a given. Don't put off speaking to a healthcare professional.[5,11]

Could it be Chronic Hand Eczema?

The question below can help you get an idea of whether your symptoms could be Chronic Hand Eczema.[1]
(Tick if yes)*

Has the eczema on your hands or wrists…

>3 MONTHS — A) lasted 3 months or more? ☐

OR

>2X YEAR — B) come back 2 times or more in the past year? ☐

If you answered yes to question **A or **B**, it could be Chronic Hand Eczema,[1] but only a **healthcare professional** (normally a doctor or dermatologist) can diagnose Chronic Hand Eczema. This questionnaire is not intended to provide medical or diagnostic advice. Always speak to your healthcare professional.*

IN THE 'SYMPTOM TRACKER' SECTION, YOU'LL FIND SOME USEFUL TIPS THAT COULD SUPPORT A PRODUCTIVE CONVERSATION WITH YOUR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL.

Naming some of the signs of Chronic Hand Eczema

It can be useful to know the right words to describe the signs of Chronic Hand Eczema.

ERYTHEMA	*Skin looks red[12]*
SCALING	*Flakes of skin[12]*
FISSURES	*Cracks in the skin[12]*
LICHENIFICATION	*Hard, rough patches of skin that might look darker than the skin around it[12]*
VESICLES	*Small bumps, normally clear and filled with a fluid[12]*
EDEMA	*Swelling of the skin[13]*
HYPERKERATOSIS	*Thickening of the outer layer of the skin[14]*

FLARE-UPS & TRIGGERS

Flare-ups

The symptoms of Chronic Hand Eczema can change over time, sometimes getting better and then worse again. Times when symptoms are worse are called **'flare-ups'** or **'flares'**.[5,7] Flare-ups can sometimes happen if you come into contact with triggers.[5]

Triggers

Triggers are things that can lead to an eczema flare-up. Finding out what things could make Chronic Hand Eczema worse and staying away from them as much as possible could be useful.[1,3,15]

Triggers can be different for everyone, but might include things like:

SOAPS[5]

CHEMICALS[5]

WET WORK[1]

ALCOHOL[16]

SMOKING[1,17]

RUBBER[1,18]

FOODS[18]

METALWORK[1,18]

STRESS[5,16]

WASHING YOUR HANDS A LOT[5]

COLD OR WARM TEMPERATURES[5]

HORMONAL CHANGES[16]

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If a healthcare professional diagnoses Chronic Hand Eczema, they might also offer tests to find out things that could trigger it and suggest ways to avoid them.

HOW TO MANAGE IT

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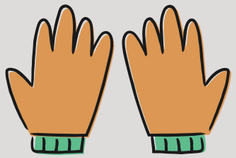
HAND ECZEMA THAT KEEPS COMING BACK?[1,19]

Chronic Hand Eczema might not completely go away for everyone, but there are things that can be done to help get it under control.[3,16]

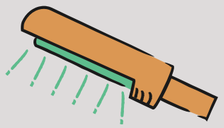


BASIC HAND CARE

Whatever the stage of Chronic Hand Eczema, basic hand care is something that might be recommended. It might include using **emollients,** wearing gloves, staying away from triggers (like allergens or irritants), or educational programs[1,3]

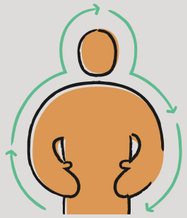
TOPICAL TREATMENTS

Topical treatments are treatments that are applied to your skin, like lotions or creams[1,3]



PHOTOTHERAPY

Phototherapy involves using ultraviolet (UV) light to treat moderate to severe Chronic Hand Eczema, and is carried out by specialists at a clinic or hospital[3,20]



SYSTEMIC THERAPY

Systemic therapy can be taken by mouth or injection, and works throughout your whole body.[3,21]

A healthcare professional can talk to you about if and which treatment is suitable, including any benefits and side effects.

IF IT'S CHRONIC HAND ECZEMA, A HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL COULD PROVIDE ONGOING SUPPORT.[1,6,11,19,22]

SYMPTOM TRACKER

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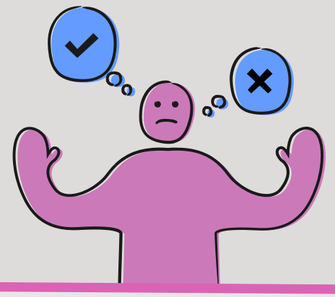
CANCELING PLANS, HIDING HANDS, TAKING TIME OFF WORK AGAIN...

Sometimes, it can feel like Chronic Hand Eczema is making every decision, big and small.[6,8,22]



Talking about Chronic Hand Eczema, even to family and friends, can be hard. Some people with Chronic Hand Eczema might feel like their symptoms aren't serious enough to see a healthcare professional,[6,23] or maybe that no one understands what it feels like.[6]

Communicating the effects of Chronic Hand Eczema might be difficult, especially as symptoms can change over time. Hands may not look as bad as they did during a previous flare-up.[5–7] On top of this, it can be hard to bring up the less visible impacts that CHE can have: the mental, emotional and social effects.[6]

Keeping track of symptoms and feelings between appointments can help a healthcare professional understand the full impact of Chronic Hand Eczema and how it might be affecting daily life.

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PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS

Started tracking: _____ Stopped tracking: _____

1. On your worst day since tracking, how would you rate the following symptoms out of 5:[24]

Itch	1	2	3	4	5
Pain	1	2	3	4	5
Cracking	1	2	3	4	5
Redness	1	2	3	4	5
Dryness	1	2	3	4	5
Flaking	1	2	3	4	5
Any other symptoms *(like erythema or scaling)*	1	2	3	4	5
	Not bad at all				Extremely badly

2. How much would you say these symptoms affected you during this time?

1 2 3 4 5

Not bad at all — Extremely badly

3. Did these symptoms impact your sleep at all?[5,25]

1 2 3 4 5

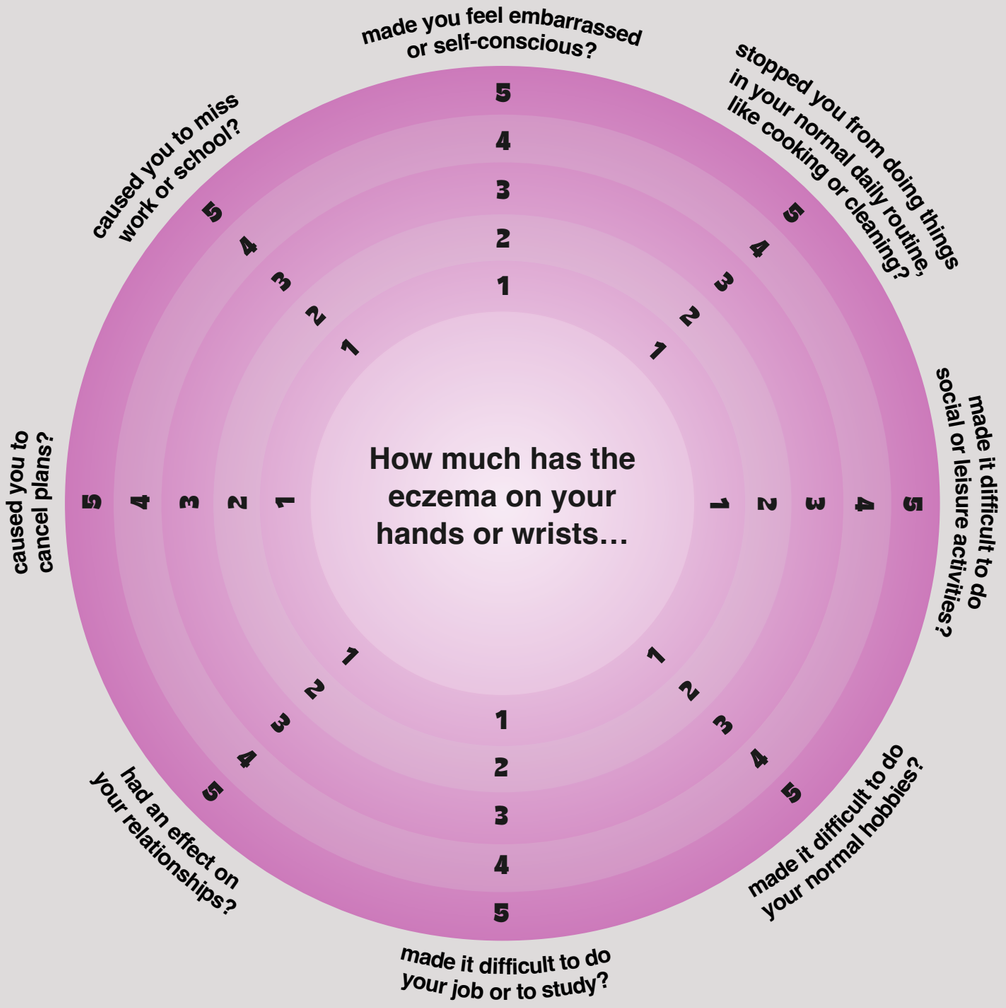
Not bad at all — Extremely badly

4. How many days did your longest flare last? _____ days

TRACKING SYMPTOMS CAN HELP CAPTURE ANY CHANGES IN SEVERITY OVER TIME.[24]

NOW LET'S TALK ABOUT THE SYMPTOMS BEYOND THE PHYSICAL

Rate from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much or very often):[5,6]



1. **Have you noticed any triggers that cause a flare up?**[1,3,15]

2. **Are you trying anything to help with any flare-ups?**[1,3,15]
(this could include staying away from certain allergens or irritants, wearing gloves, using creams or emollients)

TREATMENT GOALS

It's important to set realistic expectations and treatment goals.[11]

1. What are you hoping treatment will help you achieve?

2. List out any previous treatments used for Chronic Hand Eczema:

3. Day treatment started:

4. Were the treatment(s) used according to a healthcare professional's recommendation?

Management plan[1,3,16,26]

(You can complete this with a healthcare professional)

Ask your healthcare professional to list any allergens they have identified (these may have long or complicated names)[7]

Plan for how to avoid triggers, or things to swap to instead[1,3]

Other lifestyle changes your healthcare professional thinks might help (like wearing gloves, or stopping smoking)[1,17]

Following a management plan is optional. A healthcare professional can provide guidance on potentially useful approaches.

DON'T WAIT FOR SYMPTOMS TO START HOLDING YOU BACK EVEN MORE. TALK TO A HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL AND TAKE BACK CONTROL.[6]

If you've had eczema on your hands and wrists for **more than 3 months,** or if it comes back **2 times or more in a year,** it could be **Chronic Hand Eczema.***[1,11]

See a healthcare professional and...

EXPRESS YOURSELF.

*Chronic Hand Eczema can only be diagnosed by a healthcare professional.

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GLOSSARY

Useful words when talking about Chronic Hand Eczema.

ALLERGEN
Something that causes an allergic reaction, like pollen, pet dander, or certain foods. These can sometimes trigger eczema flare-ups.[27]

ATOPIC DERMATITIS
Another name for eczema. It's a skin condition that can make your skin dry and itchy.[27,28]

CHRONIC HAND ECZEMA
Eczema on your hands and wrists that hasn't gone away for over 3 months, or that happens at least 2 times in a year.[1]

CONTAGIOUS
Can be spread from person to person. Chronic Hand Eczema cannot be spread to others. You can't catch it like a cold.[11,29]

DERMATOLOGIST
A skin doctor.[27]

EDEMA
Swelling.[13]

EMOLLIENT
A moisturizer that helps soften and hydrate your skin.[30]

ERYTHEMA
Redness of the skin.[12]

FISSURES
Cracks in the skin.[12]

FLARE-UP/FLARE
When your eczema gets worse suddenly. It might become more itchy, painful, red and sore.[5,7]

HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL
Someone who works in healthcare, like a doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or dermatologist.

HYPERKERATOSIS
Extra-thick skin, like your skin has built up extra layers.[31]

INFLAMMATION
Redness, swelling, heat, and pain in an area of the body. It's your body's way of reacting to injury or irritation.[28]

IRRITANT
Something that bothers your skin and can make your eczema worse, like soap, detergents, or certain chemicals.[32]

LICHENIFICATION
Thickening and hardening of the skin, often caused by repeated scratching.[12]

PRURITUS
Itching.[33]

PHOTOTHERAPY/PUVA/UVB
Light therapy treatments that can be used in the treatment of eczema.[3,20]

SCALING
Dry, flaky skin.[12]

SYMPTOMS
Symptoms are signs that your body is giving you. When it comes to Chronic Hand Eczema, symptoms might include things like itching, redness, dryness or cracking. These symptoms can come and go.[27]

SYSTEMIC
Medicine that you take by mouth or injection that works throughout your whole body and travels through the bloodstream.[21]

TOPICAL
Medicine that you put directly on your skin, like creams or ointments.[34,35]

VESICLES
Small, fluid-filled blisters.[12]

WET WORK
Jobs or activities that involve frequent contact with water, like hairdressing, cleaning, or healthcare. This can cause dry hands and make eczema worse.[36]

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