Occupational Health Skin Care Advice

University of Huddersfield Occupational Health Department

Tel 01484 471800
email occupational.health@hud.ac.uk
The skin is the largest organ in your body. The primary functions of the skin are to act as a barrier, prevent water loss from the body and to regulate temperature. Many day to day products at home and at work can have a negative effect on your skin.

- Lubricants and detergents can dry out the skin and cause cracking and dryness
- Some substances strip out the natural oils and remove protection
- Corrosive chemicals may burn the skin
- Some substances e.g. latex, mechanical oils or unset concrete can cause allergic reactions

If you notice any skin changes it is important to report this to your manager or course leader.

This could include redness, itchiness, rash, soreness, dryness, cracking or inflamed skin.

If you work in health care setting you have a responsibility to ensure that your skin remains intact. This is because microorganisms colonise in open wounds and can go on to cause infections that can be passed on to vulnerable individuals.
To keep your skin in good condition please follow this simple guide:

- Wash with warm water
- Rinse well before applying soap
- Don’t use chemicals or washing up liquid to wash with as these can strip out the natural oils and cause damage to the skin
- Make sure that soap is rinsed off completely before drying your skin thoroughly using clean towels
- Don’t apply hand cream just before putting on gloves
- If you are supplied with gloves to wear ensure that you use the correct ones for the task being undertaken and that they are the right size for you
- Only wear gloves for the length of time that the task takes. Keeping them on can cause damage by reducing hydration in your skin
- If you seek advice from your GP regarding a skin complaint make sure that they know what work you do and what hobbies you have since this can help determine the cause of the problems
- If you do not have adequate facilities to care for your skin at work bring it to the attention of your supervisor
- If skin irritation does not settle down within a few days with the actions described above please advise your manager
Skin care
Hand washing and applying hand cream

Follow the steps shown:

1. Wet hands with warm water
2. Apply soap/cleanser
   - Never use solvents
3. Distribute soap/cleanser, rubbing in for 30 seconds
4. Ensure shaded areas are not missed
5. Apply hand cream
6. Turn off tap with towel
7. Dry thoroughly with soft towel
8. Rinse off all soap/cleanser

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