

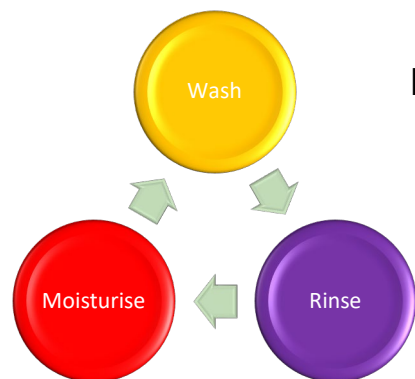
Skin Conditioning After Work



A main function of our skin is to create a barrier (Patton & Thibodeau, 2014), a break in this barrier opens up the potential for us as healthcare workers to contract or pass on infection to our patients, colleagues, or loved ones.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE, no date) class healthcare workers as 'wet workers'. This means there is an increased risk of developing irritant dermatitis as a result of our work. At the very least if the skin to our hands becomes cracked and open the following may occur:

- Infection risk (to ourselves or others)
- Painful both at work and when at home
- May need to work in a non-clinical role until healed
- If condition becomes very severe, may need to consider a permanent non-clinical role



Love your hands – they work hard for you

- Ensure you rinse & dry the skin thoroughly with water after washing
- Apply moisturiser to your hands after every wash, or as often as you can during the day & before bed
- Avoid contact with any detergent directly on the skin outside of work (e.g. soap, paint, cleaning products)
- Use gloves for washing up, decorating or any other task when your skin may be exposed to chemicals
- Be proactive – moisturise regularly with a product that you find works well for you. Make time to care
- If you have an existing skin condition keep it under control and seek early guidance if it appears to be getting worse

Further help

- Occupational Health Service ext. 4939 bhnft.occupationalhealth@nhs.net
- British Association of Dermatologists <https://www.bad.org.uk/shared/get-file.ashx?id=3776&itemtype=document>
- Health & Safety Executive <https://www.hse.gov.uk/skin/employ/dermatitis.htm>