

NHS Tayside and University of Dundee are working in partnership to proactively manage and support safe and effective skin health management. Hand Hygiene, including hand washing, is a significant element of your practice and therefore important that you are supported in recognising hazards in the workplace and how to best manage them. As a result, minimising the chance of developing long term skin damage which could have a detrimental effect on both your personal and professional lives.

Dermatitis, the relevant skin condition, can be itchy, painful and sometimes disabling. This information sheet is a reference for the key elements of efficient and effective skin health management. Further information can be found in NHS Tayside's Skin Health Guidance document and the Skin Health Webpage contents on Staffnet (NHS Tayside Intranet) when on placements.

- Remember hobbies/activities such as working with motor oils, strong chemicals, outdoor activities (eg.rock climbing) and household chores are causative factors in skin damage which is often unseen. Remember rough and dry skin **is** damaged skin – learn to manage and protect skin outside work as.....
- It is the same hands, and therefore skin, which you have when on placement. Damaged skin allows chemicals and biological hazards to access deeper more sensitive layers of our skin leading to pain and more chronic problems in the longer term.
- All products **must** be obtained via the NHS Tayside Supplies Department or Pharmacy who will only stock approved products however, if you have been prescribed/advised to use a product at work, this is acceptable practice but you **must** inform the senior person in your placement area. The University will advise of product requirements ahead of your placements.
- If you have a preexisting skin condition, which is well managed, please ensure that any **differences** in how your skin is reacting on placement is brought to the attention of Tutor/Clinical Area Lead as soon as possible to ensure timely support.
- Hand/wrist jewellery is **not** acceptable other than one plain band. Rings etc. encourage the buildup of skin irritants and cause skin rubbing which can damage your skin.
- Don't wear gloves unless necessary, choose the type of glove to be worn in accordance with NHS Tayside policy and guidance and wear the correct size of glove – remember if wearing for a period of time your hands will swell slightly making the gloves tighter on the skin.
- Avoid items/substances you have a known sensitivity to e.g. **never** wear/handle latex products if you have a suspected or confirmed diagnosis of latex allergy.
- Remember that Alcohol Based Hand Rubs (ABHRs) provide an emollient effect whilst decontaminating your skin to an aseptic level, as well as being portable, and as such more convenient. Ensure that you rub them into your skin until dry; do **not** air dry.
- Use hand wash agents sparingly. Wash when you need to clean. Remember all detergent based handwashes strip out natural oils and fats from your skin and increase irritant effects.
- If you must wash; use tepid water, wet hands **before** applying hand wash, rinse thoroughly to remove all remaining traces of hand wash & pat skin dry with soft disposable towels; **don't** rub.
- Before donning gloves always ensure your hands are thoroughly dry & do **not** apply emollients.
- Ensure the correct doffing of gloves is undertaken to limit shearing of skin.
- Ensure that you apply hospital supplied hand cream (non-perfumed, water-based) at least a couple of times a shift and certainly before breaks/end of shift. This will help reduce dryness and make the skin less susceptible to irritation. Apply more often when you can if your skin is prone to dryness or you have an underlying skin condition.

Dermatitis is easier to treat if recognised early. If you are concerned about the condition of your skin, or you notice changes in your skin, you **must** inform your Tutor and Person in Charge at placement. You can if wished also consult your GP.

More information on skin conditions can be found on

[The National Eczema Society's website](#)

[The Health and Safety Executive \(HSE\)'s website](#)

[British Association of Dermatologists website](#)