

# Work-related skin problems

Your skin is the largest organ on your body, and it has important functions. When it's healthy, your skin helps:

- Regulate your body's temperature
- Keep invaders like bacteria and fungus out
- Protect you from the elements, such as cold and sun



## HEALTHY SKIN AT WORK

Take precautions to prevent skin irritation and injury at work. If you work with chemicals, follow these steps:

- Store all chemicals safely and label them correctly.
- Use proper waste containers.
- Have a material safety data sheet (MSDS) for every dangerous substance used at work.
- Wear protective gear like gloves, aprons, hats and masks.
- Take off oil- or chemical-soaked work clothes before you leave work.
- Know what to do if your skin comes in contact with a harmful substance.
- When possible, use tools to handle dangerous materials so they don't touch your skin.
- If you work with radiation, wear protective clothing and gear to prevent exposure.

### If you wash your hands frequently at work:

- Do not clean your skin with chemicals. Use only cleansers designed for the skin.
- Apply lotion, cream or petroleum jelly after washing hands to prevent dryness, cracking and eczema.

### If you work outdoors, take sun protection seriously.

#### Make sure you:

- Apply sunscreen at least every two hours if you're in the sun.
- Wear sunglasses, a wide-brimmed hat and clothing that covers your body.



## YOUR JOB & YOUR SKIN

Your skin needs care and protection to stay healthy — at home and at work. Do you work with chemicals or harmful substances? Do you wash your hands often? People who work in these fields are more prone to work-related skin problems:

- Manufacturing
- Food production
- Construction
- Machine tool operation
- Printing
- Metal plating
- Leather processing
- Engine service
- Landscaping
- Farming
- Forestry
- Health care

Source: American Academy of Family Physicians