

# Southside Dermatology

## HAND CARE

- 1.) Hand washing frequency: A hand rash can be due to a number of primary causes, but it is always made worse by frequent hand washing. As a target, try not to wash your hands in the sink more than three times a day. If you are washing them more than this, it is almost certainly (washing) irritates, chaps and dries. Even washing with plain water and no soap is bad, particularly in the winter. The only solution: cut hand washing to the bare minimum. This is the most important thing you can do for your hands other than medication, and is more important than medication for maintaining remissions.

The best strategy is to never get your hands dirty, so be inventive and try to think of ways to avoid dirtying your hands.

Falling this, gloves are probably your next best bet. For wet work, try either disposable vinyl or latex gloves (for brief wet exposure) or lined dish washing gloves for more extensive wet exposure (mopping, dish washing). For dirty work, use either cotton or leather work gloves. For food handlers, nurses, and health care workers that are concerned about the transmission of germs via the hands, should use disposable exam gloves changed frequently (as between patients for nurses) thus avoiding the need to wash hands between patients.

A word about the restroom. If you are bothered by not washing after urinating, try using disposable gloves for this chore, or use one of the waterless alternatives suggested below. Hand washing with soap and water after defecating is probably one of the few times you DO want to take advantage of the powerful antibacterial effect of soap and water.

Still having trouble cutting down on hand washing? Try these non-prescription alternatives to soap and water:

- A.) Cetaphil or Aquanil waterless cleaners. These are applied liberally to the hands, rubbed vigorously for a minute or two to remove all dirt and grime and then are simply wiped off with paper towels or soft cloth. Do not use water after this or you will defeat the purpose. These also function as hand moisturizers, so this actually helps to heal sore, irritated hands.
- B.) Baby Wipes. These can be used to remove dirt and grime without the use of water. While slightly more irritating than Cetaphil cleaning, this is convenient and will be less damaging than water.
- C.) Waterless hand cleaners. For really dirty hands (e.g. auto mechanics and people who get them really dirty as an unavoidable part of their job) try these (usually) pink cream/gel products. They are used to remove the worst of the grime and then pink stuff is