

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.



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

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.

Source: American Academy of Family Physicians