

Contact Dermatitis: Brief Version

What is contact dermatitis?

You have contact dermatitis when your skin gets a rash after something irritating touches it.

What is the cause?

The skin may touch something that irritates it, like:

- Soaps or detergents
- Cleaning products

You may be allergic to something that touches your skin, like:

- Hair dyes
- Fingernail polish
- Deodorants

Examples of other things that may cause a rash are:

- Rubber
- Nickel (a metal used in inexpensive jewelry, belt buckles, and the backs of watches)
- Poison ivy

What are the symptoms?

Your skin may:

- Itch
- Swell
- Look red
- Have blisters that may break open and ooze, crust, or scale

How is it treated?

Your healthcare provider may give you:

- A cream to stop the itching
- Medicine to take by mouth for itching
- Antibiotic medicine if the rash got infected

How can I take care of myself?

Follow your healthcare provider's advice. It can help if you:

- Put cool, moist cloths on the rash.
- Don't irritate the rash, like by scratching your skin or putting makeup on it.
- Stay away from what caused the rash.

How can I help prevent it?

If you know what caused the rash:

- Make sure the irritant is not in the makeup, soap, or other products that you use. You may need to stop using makeup one product at a time to see if any one product seems to make your rash worse.
- Gently wash your skin right away if you touch something that irritates it.

Even if you don't know what caused your rash, it can help to follow these suggestions:

- Learn what poison oak, poison ivy, and ragweed look like. Stay away from these plants.
- Use makeup that does not cause allergies. Buy makeup with the word "hypoallergenic" on the label.
- When your skin gets wet, pat it dry. Don't rub it.
- Try not to use chemicals. Wear safe gloves when you have to use chemicals.
- Use a dishwasher or wear gloves when you wash dishes.

Developed by RelayHealth.

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