

Hairdressers' Hands

When most people think of hairdressers they think of glamour, fashion and pampering. But there is nothing glamorous about the health and safety issues that arise from mishandling chemicals and not being aware of the serious health risks associated with the profession.

Dermatitis of the hands is the biggest occupational health and safety (OHS) hazard for hairdressers, with as many as 60% being affected at some time in their career. Unfortunately, this may cause many hairdressers to give up their chosen career because of skin problems. Prevention is the key, advises the Occupational Dermatology Research & Education Centre.*

There are three types of dermatitis with differing causes and symptoms:

The most common is ***Irritant contact dermatitis*** which causes the skin on the hands to dry out, split and crack. It is caused by the continual wetting and drying of the skin, as well as contact with shampoos and conditioners and other chemicals. Irritant contact dermatitis develops gradually, it is therefore really important to take care of one's hands right from the start of a career in hairdressing.

Allergic contact dermatitis causes the skin on the hands to become very itchy, split, and blister. It is caused by contact with colours, tints, perm solutions and bleach. Once allergic contact dermatitis has developed, there is no cure and no form of desensitization.

Contact urticaria is caused by an allergy to particular proteins, which are found in powdered disposable latex gloves and bleach. It produces an immediate reaction, eg welts on the skin, runny nose, sneezing and asthma, and can develop into a life threatening condition.

All of the above conditions can be easily prevented by using the correct hand protection for specific applications. The Occupational Dermatology Research and Education Centre confirm that particular disposable gloves offer suitable protection.*

The Ansell **Touch N Tuff™** offers optimal protection against the harsh chemicals found in colouring, perming and bleaching agents. Fitting like a second skin **Touch N Tuff™** combines excellent fingertip sensitivity and comfort. Three times more puncture resistant than latex or vinyl this nitrile glove is extremely durable and may be reused, provided they are not turned inside out.



Ansell Touch N Tuff™

For basin and cleaning work Ansell highly recommends their **FreshTouch™** range, available in both blue or clear. The powder-free vinyl gloves offer the wearer comfort, dexterity and durability. The range is ergonomically designed for easy on/off and disposal. Coming very soon to the market is the new **FreshTouch™+ Ultragrip** with added glycerine to care and moisturise your hands while you work. Moisturising hands regularly is specifically recommended by the Occupational Dermatology Research and Education Centre to help prevent irritant contact dermatitis.*

Don't take chances with the health and safety of your employees! Get Ansell gloves and get protected. For more information FREECALL Ansell on 1800 337 041, or email protection@ap.ansell.com.

*Source: Occupational Dermatology Research and Education Centre "Hairdressers your future is in your hands" Poster, Brochure and CD-ROM and www.occderm.asn.au

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