

Dermatitis

The most common type of health hazard in the construction industry is called contact dermatitis. Good skincare is an essential way of avoiding this occupational health hazard.

- **Contact Dermatitis** is caused by certain substances used at work that come into contact with the skin. It can look like any common rash not connected with work and it most commonly affects the hands, forearms and legs.

It is commonly caused by dust, mist or fumes that you may get on your face, neck and chest, for example from:-

- Cement
 - Brick
 - Plaster
 - Solvents
 - Paints and varnishes
 - Certain Woods
 - Petrol
- Some substances take weeks, months or even longer to cause dermatitis as the skin becomes allergic to them. The skin may become red, itchy or blistered which are the early signs of the problem. Common causes include:-
 - Chrome and nickel compounds
 - Some resins, glues and hardeners
 - Some chemicals
 - Look for the **warning signs** on the packaging of the containers. If hazardous, ensure “COSHH Assessment” completed. Know the controls and implement them.
 - If you work with substances that can cause dermatitis these are the natural steps to follow to help **avoid** medical problems.
 - **avoid** skin contact with the substance
 - **wear** protective clothing such as gloves
 - **keep** your skin clean and use barrier creams
 - **check** your skin regularly to monitor problems
 - **ensure** that you wash affected areas thoroughly at the end of work
 - If you do suffer from dermatitis, your skin can become so damaged that you may have to change jobs, so avoid contact with the substances and wear the right protection.

Questions:

- 1 What workplace causes of rashes are there?
- 2 How would you recognise an allergy to substances?
- 3 How do you minimise the risk of dermatitis from substances?

Remember:

**If you notice a rash, contact your doctor
Dermatitis can become serious if not treated**

Further Information:- CIP Manual, Section 25