

Coronavirus

Is handwashing drying your skin?

TIPS TO KEEP YOUR SKIN HEALTHY AND HYDRATED

Washing your hands is critical to help stop the spread of COVID-19, especially after using the restroom, visiting a public place, and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.

However, frequent handwashing can cause dry skin that can flake, itch, crack, and even bleed without proper precautions. This can cause open wounds in the skin that can allow in bacteria and other germs and increase your risk for infection.

To reduce your risk of dry, cracked skin from handwashing, follow these tips from board-certified dermatologists:



Use lukewarm water.

Wash your hands with soap and lukewarm water for **at least 20 seconds**.



Moisturize immediately after washing your hands.

Pat your hands dry, then rub **a pea-sized amount** of moisturizer over your hands.



Use moisturizers with mineral oil or petrolatum.

Look for ointments and creams — the ones you **squeeze out of a tube** — as these are **more effective** than products you pump out of a bottle.



Choose fragrance- and dye-free moisturizers.

These are **less irritating** for your skin.



When soap and water aren't available, use hand sanitizer.

The CDC recommends using hand sanitizer with **at least 60% alcohol**. Since these can be drying, apply moisturizer after your hands dry.



Continue washing your hands, even if they feel dry.

Washing your hands can **remove harmful bacteria and viruses**.



Don't believe everything you hear or see online.

Using moisturizer after washing your hands **does NOT** negate your handwashing efforts, and there is **NO evidence** that using hand sanitizer makes you more vulnerable to infections or viruses.

For more information about COVID-19, visit the CDC's website at [cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus).

For help with persistently dry skin, see a board-certified dermatologist.

Find one in your area at [aad.org/findaderm](https://www.aad.org/findaderm).



AMERICAN ACADEMY of
DERMATOLOGY | ASSOCIATION