Dyshidrotic Eczema (Pompholyx)

Dyshidrotic eczema is a skin condition that causes small, very itchy blisters on the hands, feet, or both. It is not contagious. The blisters often last 3-4 weeks and may come back overtime. A skin doctor (dermatologist) can help find your triggers and lower the chance of future flares. Read this handout to learn more.

Common Triggers

The exact cause is not known. Common triggers include:

- Washing your hands often or having wet hands for long periods
- Soaps, detergents, and cleaning products
- Sweat and heat, especially in warm or humid weather
- Personal care products, such as shampoo or scented lotion
- Metals such as nickel or cobalt found in jewelry, phones, keys, and some foods
- Stress or changes in the weather
- Work materials such as cement, cutting oil, or other chemicals

Signs and Symptoms

You may notice:

- Small, itchy blisters on your palms, fingers, soles, or toes
- Burning, tingling, or pain before blisters appear
- Sweaty skin where blisters form
- Dry, cracked, or peeling skin as blisters heal
- Dark spots after blisters heal, especially in darker skin tones
- Nail changes, such as pits or thick nails, in long-term cases
- Signs of infection, such as redness, swelling, or yellow crusting

Treatment

Treatment can calm a flare and protect your skin. Your provider may suggest:

- Cool compresses or medicated soaks for 15 minutes, 2-4 times each day
- Steroid creams or ointments to lower swelling and itching
- Anti-itch medicine, such as pramoxine or antihistamines
- Thick creams or ointments to keep skin moist
- Stronger medicines or light therapy for severe cases
- Treatment for sweating, such as prescription antiperspirants or botulinum toxin (Botox®)
- Patch testing to look for allergies that may trigger flares

Home Care

- **Do not** scratch your skin. This can lead to infection.
- Use thick, fragrance-free creams or ointments instead of lotion.
- Put on moisturizer after each hand wash, after bathing, and when your skin feels dry.
- Take off rings before washing your hands or using moisturizer.
- Wash with mild, fragrance-free cleansers. Avoid antibacterial and deodorant soaps.
- Wear cotton gloves under waterproof gloves when cleaning or washing dishes.
- Wear moisture-wicking socks if your feet are affected.
- Try stress relief methods, such as deep breathing.
- **Avoid** known triggers and irritants.

Resources

To learn more, visit the American Academy of Dermatology website and search for "dyshidrotic eczema".

https://search.aad.org/public?Search=dyshidrotic+eczema

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 10/2026 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing HF#8547