

# Taking care of your hands



## To help stop the spread of pathogens

Keeping the skin on your hands healthy and intact reduces the spread of organisms. When your hands are free from dryness and cracks, you are also more likely to perform proper hand hygiene.

### How to reduce skin irritation

#### Nails

Keep nails short and avoid using:

- Colored nail polish
- Artificial nails
- Nail enhancements

All of these can mask or harbor pathogens that can be transmitted to others.

#### Jewelry

Rings can be soil collectors. They can:

- Be difficult to keep clean, or hide bacteria and viruses from the cleaning action of hand cleansers
- Increase the number of microorganisms on your hands
- Increase the number of tears in gloves
- Lead to eczema when irritants become trapped under the ring, causing irritation

#### Bandages

- Most bandages are made to breathe (*breathe fresh air in, breathe bacteria out*)
- Bandages do not stop pathogens from spreading: Protect with proper glove use
- Bandages should be changed frequently, especially when wet

#### Gloves

Use gloves:

- For direct contact with any body fluids when using “Contact” precautions
- For handling items visibly soiled with body fluids
- When a healthcare worker has open lesions on the hands

Remember to perform hand hygiene before and after glove use.

### Hand protection 24/7

- Protect hands from chemicals and extreme conditions at home and work.
- When washing hands use lukewarm water and unscented irritant-free soap or hand cleanser.
- Rinse hands thoroughly and pat dry. Be gentle.
- Remove rings when cleaning hands so cleansing product does not become caught under rings, which can cause dermatitis.
- Moisturize frequently (non-irritating, fragrance-free products). If the product you are using is causing irritation, switch to another product.
- To prevent dry skin, wear gloves for gardening, dishwashing, and when going outside in winter.
- Routinely washing hands with soap and water followed by immediate use of an alcohol-based hand sanitizer may cause dermatitis, or skin irritation. When washing your hands, make proper use of either soap and water or hand sanitizer, but not both.
- Hands must be clean and dry when donning gloves.