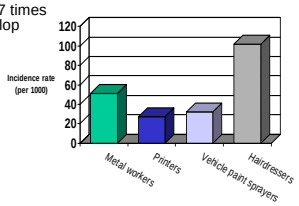
Preventing Contact Dermatitis in Hairdressers

Local Authorities, HSE and Industry Working Together

habia NHF LACORS HSE

Dermatitis in hairdressing

- Contact dermatitis is extremely common
- At least 70% hairdressers suffer some form of skin damage*
- Dermatologists suggest that between 42-57% develop dermatitis*
- Hairdressers are 17 times more likely to develop dermatitis†



*J.S. English, 2004
† Epiderm 2004

What is contact dermatitis?

- Inflamed skin that leads to:
  - Dryness
  - Redness
  - Itching
  - Scaling/Flaking
  - Cracking/Blistering
  - Pain

Contact Dermatitis

- Contact dermatitis cannot be passed from one person to another
- You may not have it now but that doesn't mean you will never develop it
- Contact dermatitis can be caused and made worse within the workplace
- Often starts on the hands and can spread to other parts of the body

Types of contact dermatitis

- Irritant Contact Dermatitis
  - Single heavy dose or prolonged exposure
- Allergic Contact Dermatitis
  - Repeated exposure, sensitisation

What causes dermatitis?

- Immersion
  - washing/shampooing hair with bare hands
- Direct handling
  - handling equipment soaked in chemicals
- Contaminated surfaces
  - clothing/tools/containers
- Splashing
  - mixing/handling chemicals
- Depositing
  - aerosols/dust

What is wet work?

- Wet work means having your hands frequently in contact with water. As a guide:
  - 10 or more clients per day
  - More than 2 hours contact with water per day
  - Tasks such as cleaning surfaces or tools on a daily basis

How to prevent contact dermatitis?

- **A**void contact
- **P**rotect skin
- **C**heck for early signs of dermatitis

Avoid skin contact

- No Contact – No Dermatitis
  - Make people aware of dermatitis and its causes
  - Identify the substances and activities presenting a risk
  - Train your team in the steps they need to take to protect themselves
  - Promptly remove products from skin following any accidental exposure
  - Good housekeeping particularly when spillages occur to prevent subsequent contamination
  - Job rotation to limit the amount of time doing wet work

Protect the Skin

Protect the Skin

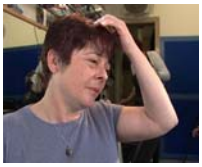
- Whenever hands are wet, dry them thoroughly afterwards with a soft cotton or paper towel
- Use moisturising creams after each hand wash
  - Ensure all parts of hands are covered
  - Barrier creams are ineffective
    - http://www.hse.gov.uk/skin/posters/skinmethod.pdf

Check the Skin

- Check for early signs of dermatitis
- Who checks
  - Employee
  - Responsible person
- What next
  - Investigation
  - Follow up
  - Reporting
  - Take action

- **http://www.hse.gov.uk/skin/posters/skindermatitis.pdf**

Miriam - A hairdresser's tale



Where to get more information & help

- Ask your local Environmental Health Inspector
- Ask your Trade Association or Industry Body
  - National Hairdressers' Federation (NHF)
    www.nhf.biz (0845 345 6500)
  - Habia
    www.habia.org
    wendy.nixon@habia.org (01302 774935)
- Health & Safety Executive Infoline
  - 0845 345 0055

A range of information is also available

- Skin at work website:
  - www.hse.gov.uk/skin
- COSHH essential guidance:
  - www.hse.gov.uk/coshh
- Habia website
  - www.habia.org
- NHF website
  - www.nhf.biz

You can prevent contact dermatitis

- Remember…
- **A**void contact
- **P**rotect skin
- **C**heck for early signs of dermatitis

Preventing Contact Dermatitis
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End