

# Tooting your horn can raise risk for skin condition

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Metal, wood components of instruments can spur contact dermatitis, expert notes.

(HealthDay) -- Musicians and their instruments often make beautiful music together, but occasionally the relationship can hit a sour note: Certain parts of musical instruments may put their owners at risk for a skin condition called contact dermatitis, an expert warns.

Contact dermatitis is a rash caused by an irritant or allergy, in which skin becomes red, scaly and inflamed. Some components of musical instruments -- such as metals, exotic woods and stains -- can cause the condition, according to Dr. Anthony Fransway of Fort Myers, Fla.

The [dermatologist](#) was slated to discuss the topic Friday at the American Academy of Dermatology's annual meeting in San Diego.

Musicians who believe they have contact dermatitis should see a dermatologist for proper evaluation and treatment. It's best to refrain from playing the instrument while the skin heals, Fransway noted.

Once the source of the problem is identified, the doctor can help the musician determine what changes need to be made in order to return to playing the instrument.

For example, for a musician with irritant contact dermatitis caused by friction or pressure, wearing protective gloves might help. If a musician has allergic contact dermatitis, it may be necessary to replace the part of the instrument that's causing the allergic reaction with another material, Fransway noted in a news release from the academy.

If no changes are made, the dermatitis will recur more rapidly with each exposure, the expert explained.

"Musicians spend so much time seeking perfection in their chosen media that the [musical instrument](#) becomes an extension of their physical bodies," Fransway said in the news release.

"Occasionally, like the rest of one's anatomy, those [body parts](#) have issues that can result in medical conditions -- such as contact [dermatitis](#) -- that require proper treatment," he added. "A dermatologist can identify the appropriate measures to rectify the problem and restore harmony."

**More information:** The U.S. National Library of Medicine has more about [contact dermatitis](#).

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