

Itching for a solution to that rash?

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(HealthDay)—Maybe it's a new soap or the dry, cold weather that has turned your hands red and itchy.

"There are many reasons for hand rashes," said Dr. Melissa Piliang, a board-certified dermatologist at the Cleveland Clinic in Ohio.

And the source of the problem isn't always obvious, she and other [skin](#) doctors say.

An allergy to a new soap or something else you've touched can bring on a hand rash, but it could also reflect something going on inside your body, Piliang said in a news release from the American Academy of Dermatology.

"The most common cause is eczema," Piliang said. Eczema is the term for different conditions that cause [skin inflammation](#) and irritation.

"But some hand rashes may have an allergic cause. Sometimes, an allergy can develop after years of touching the same things daily without a problem, like your wedding ring, [skin care products](#) or foods such as fish, garlic or citrus fruits," she explained.

There are some steps people can take to prevent hand rashes. Piliang provided the following tips:

- **Wear gloves.** Protect your hands with gloves while doing housework, gardening or using chemicals, such as dyes, detergents and cleaners. Replace gloves that have holes and never wear them when they are wet.
- **Stay warm.** Cold temperatures can dry out the skin, making it more susceptible to a rash. Wearing warm or insulated gloves when it's cold outside can help the skin stay moisturized.
- **Use gentle soap.** Washing hands with harsh or irritating soaps can lead to a skin rash. Use warm water and a mild cleanser or beauty bar to gently cleanse the skin.
- **Moisturize regularly.** Apply moisturizer right after washing

your hands throughout the day. Opt for products that contain glycerin or petroleum jelly.

"Thousands of things can cause a hand rash, yet most hand rashes look a lot alike to the untrained eye," said Piliang. "If you get a hand rash, see a board-certified dermatologist to help identify the cause and prevent it from becoming painful or disabling."

Hand rashes are often treated with non-prescription cream, lotion or prescription medication, the dermatologists' group notes. Doctors who suspect their patient has an allergy may recommend a skin test, called patch testing.

More information: The American Academy of Asthma, Allergy and Immunology [offers a skin allergy quiz](#).

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