



TOOLBOX TALKS

SUPERVISOR INSTRUCTIONS:

- Use toolbox trainings to encourage safety/environmental discussions during monthly meetings with employees.
- Campus Services' employees should maintain the employee sign-in sheet in their department's safety/environmental compliance binder as a record of training. All other groups should maintain a record of training in accordance with their Division's training procedures.

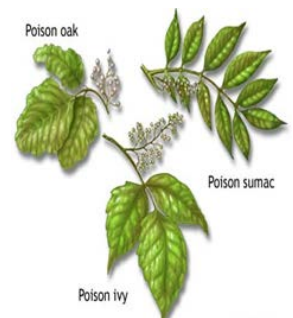
Contact dermatitis is a localized rash or irritation of the skin caused by contact with an irritating or allergy-causing substance. This type of dermatitis is the most frequent cause of occupational skin disease; irritating or allergy-causing substances that cause contact dermatitis in many people include poisonous plants such as poison ivy and sumac, cleaning solutions, detergents, industrial chemicals, latex rubber gloves and cosmetics.



Contact dermatitis most often occurs on the hands, wrists and forearms, although any area may be affected. Dusts, vapors and mists can spread the irritants and expose other areas such as the eyelids, face, ears and neck. Symptoms include itching, inflammation, swelling, burning, skin lesions, rashes, blisters, cracking and peeling of the skin. The skin may also become raw, scaly and thickened. These symptoms appear on the area of skin exposed and generally take anywhere from several days to weeks to heal. The reaction may vary from slight to severe and the dermatitis fades only if the skin no longer comes into contact with the allergen or irritant.

Types of Contact Dermatitis

Allergic Contact Dermatitis is inflammation caused by exposure to a substance to which the person has become hypersensitive or allergic. The reaction may vary depending on the irritant, body part and sensitivity of the individual. Exposure may cause immediate reaction, or the allergy may develop over time. Common plant allergens are poison ivy, poison oak and poison sumac. Many other substances can cause allergic reactions such as soaps, latex gloves, jewelry, lotions, perfumes, cosmetics and medications.



Irritant Contact Dermatitis is the most common type of contact dermatitis. It is inflammation resulting from direct contact with a substance that is caustic or corrosive to the skin. The reaction generally resembles a burn. The longer the substance remains on the skin, the more severe the reaction. Household cleaners, detergents, industrial cleaning products, drain clog removers and solvents can also cause irritant contact dermatitis.



Prevention

- If you know what caused the dermatitis, avoid the substance. If you cannot avoid the substance altogether, take steps to protect your skin from the substance.
- Wear the proper protective equipment required for the job such as: long sleeves and pants and/or gloves.
- Substitute chemicals that are less irritating or allergenic where possible.

SAFETY/ENVIRONMENTAL TOOLBOX TALKS – CONTACT DERMATITIS

- Inform workers about the substances they work with and their potential hazards.
- Apply barrier cream or lotions before wearing gloves.
- Dry hands thoroughly after washing.
- Don't use abrasive pads to scrub hands.

Treatment

- Wash the area with soap and cool water immediately after exposure.
- Workers should immediately report all skin discomforts or disorders to their supervisor, Employee Health Services and EHSO.
- In many instances, contact dermatitis can be treated through the use of calamine lotion, hydrocortisone cream, cold compresses, ointments and antihistamines such as Benadryl.
- If your symptoms do not respond to such nonprescription treatment, a trained medical professional might prescribe prescription strength antihistamines or corticosteroid creams.

Questions for Discussion

1. True or False. Contact dermatitis occurs mostly in occupational settings.

Answer: True

2. Which of the following are symptoms of contact dermatitis?

- a. itching
- b. rashes
- c. peeling of the skin
- d. All of the above

Answer: D – All of the above

3. Where should you go if you experience contact dermatitis?

- a. Employee Health Services
- b. McDonalds
- c. Woodruff P. E. Center
- d. Michael C. Carlos Museum

Answer: A – Employee Health Services