



Be glove aware

It is important to decide when to use gloves and the type of glove to use.

Inappropriate glove use (over or under use) can place staff at risk of contact dermatitis and infection. Patients can be put at risk from infection and missed opportunities for hand hygiene.

It is crucial to carry out a risk assessment to decide **whether**, and **which** type of gloves to wear.

- Task to be performed.
- Anticipated contact and compatibility with chemicals and cytotoxic drugs.
- Latex or other sensitivity.
- Glove size required.
- Your organisation's policies for creating a latex-free environment.

Gloves are **single use items** – they must be removed and changed between each patient or care task.



Be skin aware

It is estimated that each year in the UK, 1,000 health care workers develop work-related contact dermatitis (HSE, 2012).

Damaged or non-intact skin places both the patient and the health worker at risk because it prevents effective hand hygiene.

Prevention and management of occupational dermatitis

- Always follow good hand hygiene techniques
- Remember wearing gloves is not an alternative to hand hygiene.
- **Avoid** direct contact between unprotected hands and hazardous substances and/or wet work* where this is sensible and practical.
- **Protect** the skin if you cannot avoid contact and regularly apply hand moisturisers.
- **Check** skin regularly for the first signs of itchy, dry or red skin and use hand moisturisers.

* In the UK, wet work is defined as work that involves hands being wet for significant periods during the working day; as a guide – more than two hours a day or about twenty hand washes a day (HSE, 2016)

HSE (2018) www.hse.gov.uk/healthservices/dermatitis.htm

Health and Safety Executive (2016) *Dermatitis*.

Available at www.hse.gov.uk/skin/employ/dermatitis.htm