



Save Your Skin

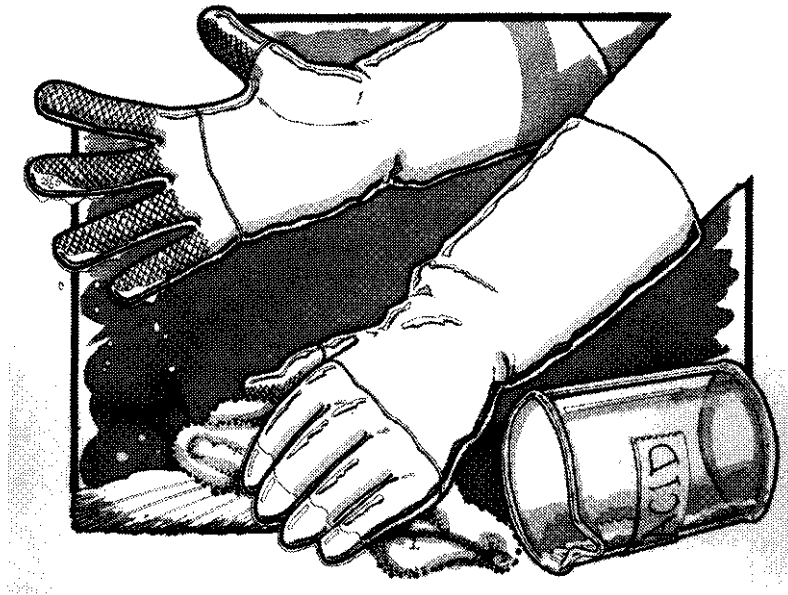
Protecting your skin from skin disease can be tricky—it requires a combination of the right personal protective equipment (PPE) for the chemicals you use and careful and thorough cleanup procedures. Your best skin protection is knowledge: Read warning labels and MSDSs and follow them rigorously, whether or not the chemical seems to bother your skin.

Protect Your Hands

Since your hands are the parts of your body most likely to come in contact with a hazardous chemical, you must be extra careful to protect them. Use the right gloves or protective hand creams—the wrong ones may dissolve in the chemical you use! If you find that the gloves themselves irritate your skin, wear cotton glove liners, and keep gloves and liners clean, both inside and out. If you use a skin cream for moderate protection of your hands, use the one recommended by your supervisor or company policy. Some creams resist water-based chemicals such as acids and bases, while others guard against solvents only. Apply skin cream often—don't rely on one thick coating that could make your hands greasy and slippery. Remember that skin creams will not protect your skin from heavy exposure to a chemical. And be sure to wear appropriate PPE to protect your body.

Preventive Maintenance

You can avoid conditions leading to skin damage by keeping your body and your workplace clean.



Remember, the longer and more often your skin is exposed, the more likely it will be damaged. Showering daily with nonirritating soap keeps chemicals from staying on your skin. Avoid washing with harsh detergents or cleaning up with solvents. Wash your work clothes, including underwear, every day, and keep them separate from other laundry. Keep your work area clean and well ventilated, change rags often, and keep cleaning materials handy.

Some Chemicals Can Burn

When corrosives such as acids or caustics are accidentally spilled on your skin, you must act quickly to prevent a burn. Immediately flush the exposed area with water for at least 20 minutes. Remember, every second counts. Get into the shower,

if required, before removing contaminated clothes. Get medical attention for accidental spills on skin, especially if the skin becomes inflamed and sore.

Treating Skin Damage

Remember that chronically irritated skin allows dangerous chemicals to enter your body. For your own health and safety, seek medical attention for skin irritation that persists. Then follow the full course of treatment, even if the skin condition seems to be healed.

Neglecting your skin is "rash behavior." No matter what chemicals you work with, you can keep your skin healthy by wearing protective equipment, keeping skin and work area clean, and learning the right procedures for each chemical you use. □