

Dermatitis and Hairdressing

Dermatitis has been described as an 'occupational hazard' in hairdressing. We do not accept this and although dermatitis tend to be an irritation rather than a dangerous condition, we are determined to do all we can to reduce dermatitis on the programme

Some ten or twelve years ago, Cheynes experienced a series of problems with our own young people contracting dermatitis – this was despite the fact that we only use the most exclusive products at the backwash! As a result, and with the help of our local HSE office, we introduced the Cheynes Skin Care policy, which now forms part of the Welcome Pack contained in the NVQ logbook given to all new people on our NVQ programmes. Since we introduced the Skin Care Policy, we have not had a single major problem with dermatitis in any of the Cheynes salons.

The main symptoms of dermatitis include: redness, itching, scaling, blistering and the skin often feels 'tight'. If allowed to get worse, the skin can crack and bleed and the problem can spread over the upper arms and body. However, if spotted early enough and adequate steps are taken, most people make a full recovery.

How can we prevent dermatitis? Prevention is possible by taking care of your hands. The following points should help you to set up your own skin care regime.

- Use a pure hand cream (not scented) on a regular basis (every night before going to bed, every morning when you get up, every lunch time, etc.) A chemist will advise you.
- Do not wear jewellery whilst at work - **especially rings!**
- Dry your hands thoroughly every time they become wet (eg between shampoos, etc).
- Always wear gloves when handling, mixing, applying and shampooing off colour.
- Keep your hands out of soapy water whenever possible (eg wear washing up gloves when cleaning dishes at home)
- Wear warm gloves whenever you are out in cold weather
- Avoid any activity which may cause the hands to become rough

If you take the necessary precautions your hands should stay trouble free, however if you do notice symptoms of dermatitis occurring, it is essential you take immediate action:

- Inform your salon manager straight away
- Cease all direct contact with any chemical (use gloves if necessary)
- Seek advice from your doctor and follow all medical advice given

If you feel you have any problems with dermatitis, please speak to your RTA immediately or contact Cheynes Training.