



## LAKELAND CHIROPRACTIC

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### **Antibacterial Soap Overuse May Help Spread Disease**

From an August 1, 2001 MSNBC article come news that scrubbing your hands too often with antibacterial soap may actually have the opposite effect and make you and others more susceptible to disease. Doctors at the summer scientific meeting of the American Academy of Dermatology said that, "When overused, the relatively harsh detergent action of antibacterial soaps leaves you vulnerable to open sores that can attract bacteria, resulting in skin problems such as eczema."

Dr. Marianne O'Donoghue, associate professor of dermatology at Rush-Presbyterian St. Luke's Medical Center in Chicago in referring to over washing with antibacterial soap said, "This begins a vicious cycle, whereby a person who develops hand eczema or another form of dermatitis touches a surface, leaving microscopic germs behind. Another person comes along, touches that surface and he too can be infected with the bacteria."

Dr. William Baugh, chief of dermatology at the Beaufort Naval Hospital in Beaufort, S.C., agreed. "I've seen patients who have developed hand eczema from these [antibacterial] products," he said. "It certainly can occur [and spread]." Baugh went on to say, "When I ask patients [with eczema] how often they wash their hands, they say 20 to 25 times a day. They think they are being good citizens by washing frequently. But you can over do a good thing."

Presently it is estimated from a recent survey that nearly half of 1,100 liquid and solid soaps contain antibacterial agents. From a dermatologist's point of view, antibacterials are among the most worrisome products contributing to skin problems, O'Donoghue said. She continued, "They literally strip away fatty acids, moisture and amino acid from the skin." Baugh added, "Overuse of antibacterials is worse than frequent use of other soaps as chemicals in the detergents strip away the naturally protective fats and oils on the skin."

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