

DESCRIPTION

A skin condition, with small blisters on the hands or feet. It is a type of eczema (dermatitis).

FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Burning and itching in the hands and feet before the skin breaks out. Small blisters appear. They may be on the tips and sides of fingers, toes, palms, and soles of the feet.
- Blisters are nontransparent and deep; they either are even with the skin, or slightly raised. They don't break easily. Eventually, small blisters come together and form large blisters.
- Hands and feet may be wet with perspiration.
- Blisters may worsen after contact with soap, water, or irritating substances.

CAUSES

Unknown. Excessive sweating is not a cause of this problem, but is often linked with it.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Outcome varies for different patients. Some recover completely with or without treatment. Others may continue to have symptoms even with treatment.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

- Continued peeling and cracking of the involved skin.
- Bacterial skin infection may occur.

GENERAL MEASURES

- Your health care provider can diagnose the condition by an exam of the affected skin area. Medical tests are usually not needed.
- Treatment involves drugs and self-care measures.
- Keep heat and moisture away from the affected areas whenever possible:
- Wear cotton socks and leather-soled shoes. Don't wear tennis shoes or other footwear made of man-made materials.
- Remove shoes and socks frequently to allow sweat to dry.
- Wear heavy-duty, cotton-lined vinyl gloves when in contact with water, soap, detergent, and other chemicals. Dry insides of gloves after use. Throw away gloves if they develop a hole.
- Wear gloves when you peel or squeeze acid fruits and vegetables.
- Wear leather or heavy-duty fabric gloves for housework or gardening.
- Avoid contact with irritating chemicals, such as paint; paint thinner; and polish for cars, floors, shoes, furniture, and metal.
- Use cool, moist compresses to help soothe the affected skin.
- Use lukewarm water and very little mild soap to shower or bathe.
- If emotional stress is a problem, try to identify the cause and find ways to control it. Counseling or learning stress management techniques may help.
- Avoid activities that lead to stress or excessive sweating. Sweating does not cause the disorder, but may aggravate it.

MEDICATIONS

- Steroidal creams or ointments are usually prescribed.
- If symptoms worsen, steroids or other medications taken by mouth may be prescribed.

SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION IF

- Signs of infection (swelling, redness, tenderness, or warmth) appear around blisters.
- Symptoms don't improve after 1 week, even with treatment or symptoms recur after treatment.