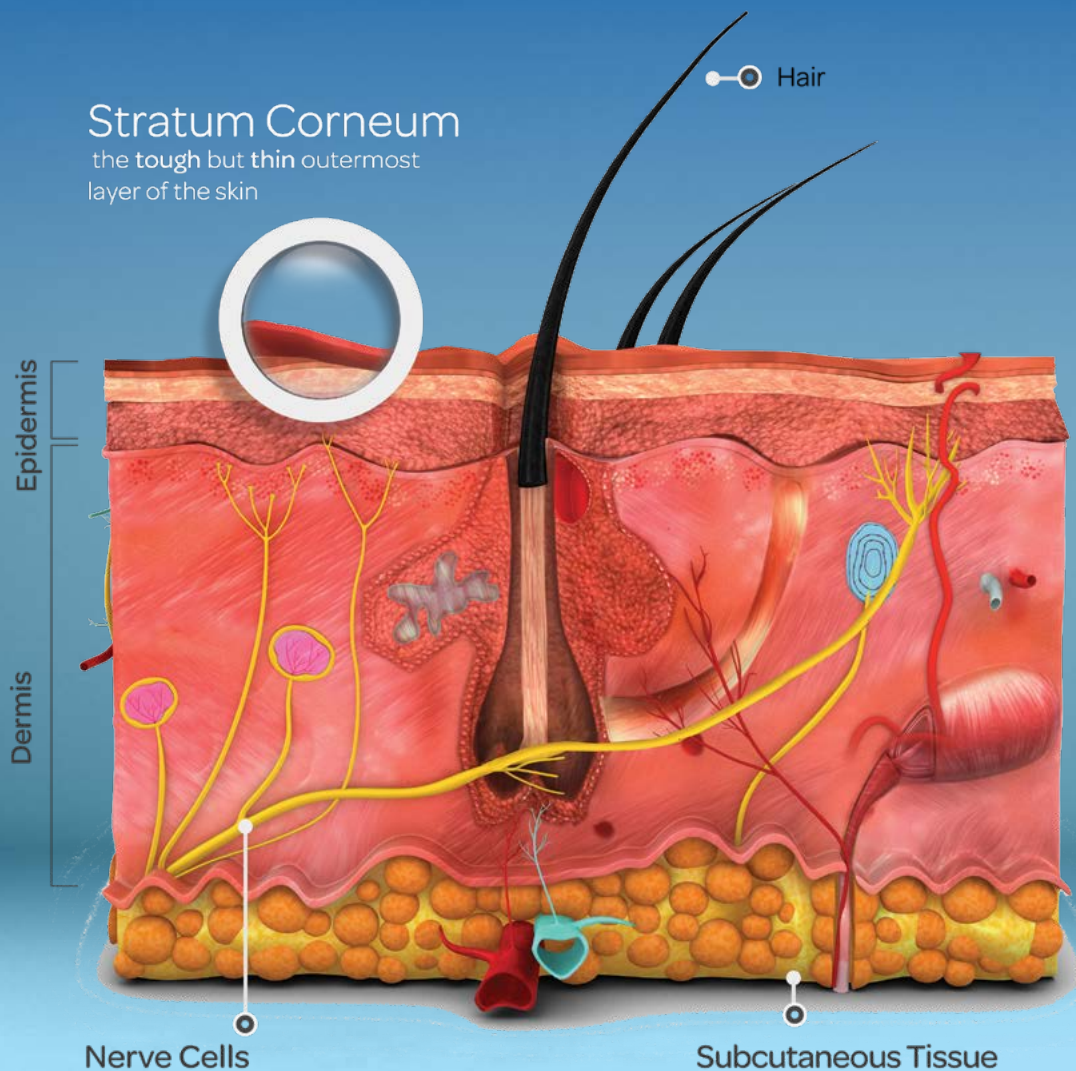


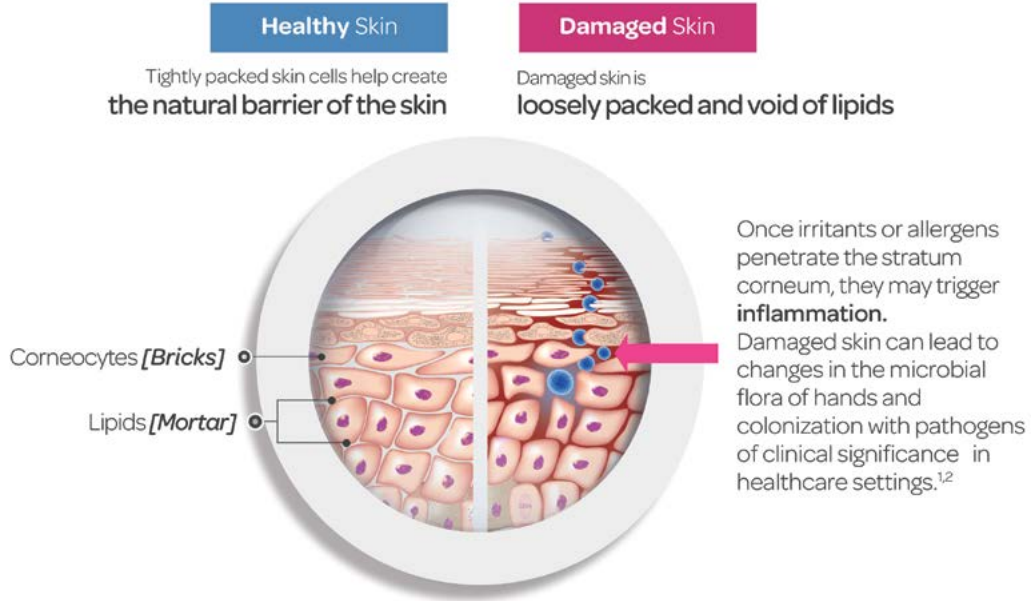
# The Ultimate Guide to Healthy Hands

Healthy skin is your first line of defense



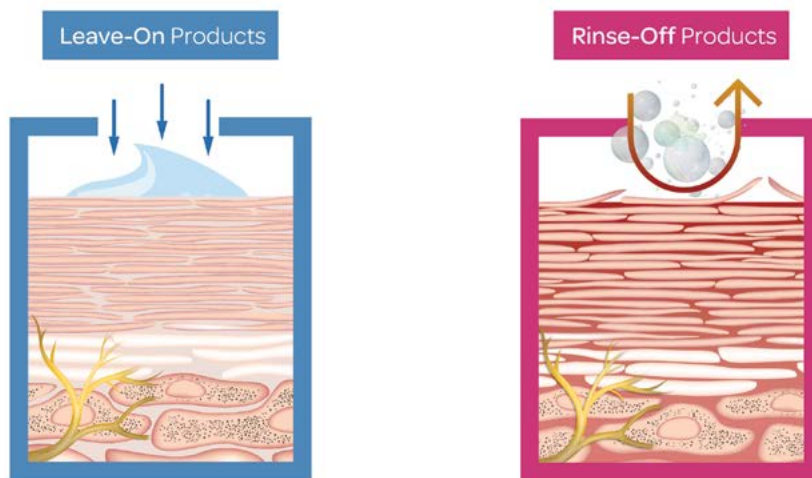
# THE STRUCTURE OF THE STRATUM CORNEUM

*The Stratum Corneum looks like a brick wall.* The Bricks are the **Corneocytes** (dried out skin cells that are ready to be shed). The Mortar is the **Intercellular Matrix**, which is composed of lipids. This brick wall structure makes the skin impermeable to foreign invaders, such as irritants, allergens, and microorganisms.



## IMPACT OF SANITIZER vs. SOAP

Using a properly formulated hand sanitizer and soap are essential for promoting the health of your skin.



Alcohol-based hand rubs are **leave-on** products and **do not physically remove skin lipids**. These products contain conditioners and emollients which can **benefit the skin**.

Hand washes are **rinse-off** products and by their very nature, **can reduce the skin's oils and lipids** creating pathways to deeper layers of the skin where nerve cells are located which leads to **potential nerve exposure**.

# The Cycle of Skin Damage

How the Overuse of Soap and Water May Damage Skin<sup>3</sup>

## OVEREXPOSURE to Hand Washing with SOAP AND WATER

Oils and lipids naturally present in the skin dissolve disrupting the natural barrier.



# Preventing the Cycle of Skin Damage

## Best Practices for Skin Care



Use **alcohol-based hand rubs** as preferred method when hands are not visibly soiled or contaminated.



**Minimize** handwashing with **soap and water**, except when hands are **visibly soiled** or **contaminated** and when specified by your hospital policy.



Use **lukewarm** or **cooler water** (not hot), wet hands before applying soap and **rinse well**.



**Pat hands gently** when drying with a paper towel. Vigorous rubbing can irritate skin.



**Do not don gloves** when hands are still wet with hand sanitizer or water. This can trap moisture underneath the gloves and irritate skin.



Use a **facility-approved lotion frequently** during your shift. Use lotions that are compatible with the provided hand hygiene products and gloves.



**Protect your skin when you're not working, too!** Wear gloves in cold, dry weather, use a mild soap at home and apply a thick, high quality lotion, especially before going to sleep.

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2. Rocha LA, Ferreira de Almeida e, Borges L, Gontijo Filho PP. Changes in hands microbiota associated with skin damage because of hand hygiene procedures on the health care workers. Am J Infect Control. 2008;37(2):155-9.  
3. Boyce JM, Kelliher S, Vallande N. Skin irritation and dryness associated with two hand-hygiene regimens: Soap and water hand washing versus hand antiseptics with an alcoholic hand gel. Infect Control Hosp Epidemiol 2000;21:441-447.

