

Use of Laundry Sanitisers Linked to Skin Rash Granular Parakeratosis

A recently published case series on the marked increase in cases of the unusual skin condition granular parakeratosis diagnosed by dermatologists in Australia has attributed this increase to the use of laundry sanitisers added to clothes washing.

Granular parakeratosis, also known as hyperkeratotic flexural erythema (HKFE), presents as a brown, scaly, flat rash which is painful and burning rather than itchy. It particularly affects the underarms and groins.

It has been linked to the inclusion of the antiseptic benzalkonium chloride in laundry sanitisers and is believed to be caused by irritation of the skin from residual benzalkonium in washed clothing.

The findings of the case series suggest that residual amounts of the antiseptic remain on clothing, as improvement is seen when contaminated clothing is repetitively washed or discarded.

The increase in diagnosis in recent years has been attributed to consumers increasingly using these products during the pandemic because of concern about COVID-19 infection. However, the COVID-19 virus is destroyed by machine washing at 18 degrees and does not require additional measures to eradicate it.

If there is concern about microbes that may cause infection, washing at higher temperatures is more appropriate than using laundry sanitisers, although cold washing is effective in most cases.

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Further Information

The full case series is available here <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/ced.15358>

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