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Just the tonic...

FLOSSING your teeth regularly removes plaque, improves gum health and even reduces the risk of heart disease. At the press of a button, the electric Philips Sonicare AirFloss (£30) directs a burst of air and water between each tooth. Easy to use and excellent for reaching the back of the mouth.
 Stockists: Boots, www.amazon.co.uk, www.philips.co.uk



THESE Wasabi Rocket and Cooler Leaves (£1.35 for a 60g bag) are a tasty way to get one of your five-a-day. This mix of rocket, red and green spinach and mizuna leaves are packed with folic acid which is needed to maintain healthy cells and blood and vitamin A - vital for a strong immune system.
 Stockists: Selected Waitrose and Sainsbury's stores



AS THE weather turns chilly exercising outdoors can seem less appealing. Mizuno's long-sleeved running top (£40) is made from a special manmade sports fabric called Breath Thermo that absorbs body moisture and converts it into heat. It also has antibacterial qualities to minimise odour.
 Stockists: www.mizuno.co.uk



DAILY EXPRESS reader offer

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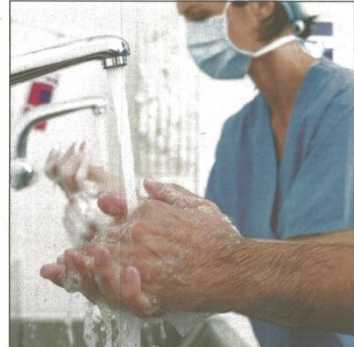
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yourhealth



WASHED-OUT: Jobs with a constant need to wash hands can cause problems

Helping hand for itchy skin

A new once-a-day pill could banish the misery of eczema and dermatitis for good, reveals AMY EVERETT

FOR years Gary Mansfield dived getting ready for work in the morning. The father-of-two who suffered from chronic hand eczema found even the simplest day-to-day tasks a nightmare. "Getting dressed, shaving or driving was a drag," says salesman Gary, 42. Even playing football with his then five-year-old son Tomas could leave him in agony.

Gary is one of six million people in the UK who suffer from this painful and debilitating condition which is characterised by swollen, cracked and blistered skin.

Gary, from Cardiff, suffered for seven years trying every available cream and lotion but to no avail. Then his dermatologist asked him to trial a new treatment called Tactino which is a once-a-day tablet. Within a month the cracks in his hands began to heal. "It was hell then this drug came along and it was

life changing," he says. This week marks the launch of Tactino. It is the first licensed treatment proven to clear chronic hand eczema that has not responded to topical steroids and creams. It works by reducing the inflammation and dampening down the immune system's response to irritants.

The medication's active ingredient is airtremetin, a chemical found naturally in the body. Treatment lasts between three and six months. Tactino is not suitable for pregnant women or those trying for a baby.

Government drugs watchdog NICE (the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence) has approved Tactino on the grounds that it could save the NHS around £million a year. It is available on the NHS with a prescription from a specialist dermatologist.

Experts say the earlier sufferers get help the less risk there is of the condition becoming long-term.

● This is National Eczema Week. For information on Tactino or dealing with hand eczema and contact dermatitis, call the National Eczema Society helpline on 0800 089 1122, Monday to Friday 9am-5pm, visit www.eczema.org or email helpline@eczema.org

TIME FOR THE GENTLE TOUCH

- When drying your hands take special care between the fingers where the skin is prone to cracking.
- Use the dishwasher to wash up. For hand-washing put on plastic gloves with cotton liners.
- Avoid direct contact with detergents, solvents and stain removers.
- Or chilles with bare hands. If you do, wash afterwards and use hand cream.
- Wearing rings can exacerbate hand eczema. Remove rings when doing housework even when eczema has visibly healed.
- Never wash your hands with soap - excellent soap substitutes such as E45 Hand Cream and E45 Softening Lotion are available.

