

outbreak of Covid-19 on Feb 3 as it lay

Moisturiser is the new weapon

By Laura Sharman

USING moisturiser before applying hand sanitiser to combat coronavirus can help stop skin cracking and leading to infection, say dermatologists.

Hand sanitiser, which is selling out across the UK as the virus spreads, acts quickly to kill microorganisms and reduce the spread of infection, experts advise.

But recurrent use can lead to dry, irritated skin which can crack and, instead of protecting against the infection, have the opposite effect.

Professionals therefore advise applying hand sanitiser after washing and moisturising your hands, as moisturising after applying the gel would compromise its effectiveness.

Emma Coleman, a dermatology practitioner and nurse with two years'

experience in the NHS, told the *Mail Online*: "I would wash hands, moisturise, then use sanitiser over the top, in that order."

Dr Zainab Laftah, from the London Dermatology Centre, said: "Dry, cracked, inflamed skin allows the penetration of irritants and increases the risk of infection.

"Moisturising your hands immediately after applying the hand sanitiser may compromise its effectiveness.

"Therefore I would recommend a combination of hand washing and moisturising or the use of a hand sanitiser when water is not available for hand washing.

"Alcohol can be extremely drying for the hands. Those who use alcohol-based hand gels may find their hands require more frequent application of a moisturiser."