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.

Healthy Skin
Tightly packed skin cells help create the natural barrier of the skin

Damaged Skin
Damaged skin is loosely packed and void of lipids

Once irritants or allergens penetrate the stratum corneum, they may trigger inflammation. Damaged skin can lead to changes in the microbial flora of hands and colonization with pathogens of clinical significance in healthcare settings.¹²

IMPACT OF SANITIZER vs. SOAP

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

Leave-On Products
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.

Rinse-Off Products
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.

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