

Emollients should only be prescribed for the management of diagnosed dermatological conditions. Patients who do not have a diagnosed dermatological condition or a risk to skin integrity (maintenance) should no longer receive NHS prescriptions and are advised to purchase emollients over the counter.

Minor conditions are suitable for self-care.

Please see [NHS England OTC leaflet](#).

Bath oils / shower products should not be prescribed due to lack of robust evidence.

Use of “junior” versions of products marketed at children are not clinically necessary and more costly. Do not prescribe emollients marketed for children. These should be purchased if desired.



Paraffin-based emollients are flammable.

Dressings and clothing that have contact with paraffin-based products are easily ignited by a naked flame. Advise patients to keep them away from fire or flames and not smoke when using them. The risk of fire should be considered when using any paraffin-based emollient. Data suggest there is also a risk for paraffin-free emollients.

Please refer to [MHRA guidance](#). Patients should be counselled to wash bedding/ clothing/ other fabrics that may have dried residue of an emollient product on them regularly at 60 degrees Celsius, to minimise the build-up which can be a fire hazard. [Further advice and resources](#)

Patients on medical oxygen who require an emollient should not use any paraffin-based products. Choose Epimax® paraffin-free ointment* £5.11 (500g) or Aproderm® Colloidal Oat Cream £5.80 (500ml pump) paraffin free. AquaGel/ water-based lubricant can be used around the nose and lips on the face while using oxygen.

[MHRA Alert](#).

*Data suggests there is also a risk for paraffin-free emollients.

Safety

-Aqueous cream is **NON-FORMULARY**: may cause skin irritation, particularly in children with eczema, possibly due to sodium lauryl sulfate content.

-Please see [MHRA DSU Mar-13 Aqueous cream: may cause skin irritation](#).

-**E45 Cream** This product should not be applied to the mucous membranes or broken skin.

- The MHRA published a Field Safety Notice linking cetostearyl alcohol (an excipient of most Epimax products and a number of other emollients) to eye-related toxicity and corneal epithelial loss.

- If patients experience any side effects from their medication, please encourage them to seek clinical advice and report to the MHRA via the Yellow Card Scheme.

- Ensure patients know that all formulations containing cetostearyl alcohol should NOT be applied near the eye and to wash hands after use- [Dermatology- Emollient Safety- NHS Somerset ICB](#)

- N.B. Emulsifying wax contains SLS and cetostearyl alcohol. Cetostearyl alcohol/ cetearyl alcohol = cetyl alcohol and stearyl alcohol

- MHRA Alerts [Topical corticosteroids: information on the risk of topical steroid withdrawal reactions](#).

Prescribing Quantity Guidance [BNF Managing Skin Conditions](#)

Advise the patient to use the emollient liberally and frequently.

(Apply at least 2 to 4 times a day; very dry skin may require application every 2 to 3 hours.)

Area of body	Creams and ointments		Lotions		Prescribe in 500g/ml pack sizes only as most cost effective.
	Quantity needed for one month	Prescribe as:	Quantity needed for one month	Prescribe as:	
Face	60-120g	500g	400ml	500ml	
Both hands	100-200g	500g	800ml	1000ml	
Scalp	200-400g	500g	800ml	1000ml	
Both arms or legs	400-800g	500-1000g	800ml	1000ml	
Trunk	1600g	1500-2000g	2000ml	2000ml	
Groin or genitalia	60-100g	500g	400ml	500ml	


The Best Emollients for Eczema ([BEE](#)) study found there is no clinically important difference between lotions, creams, gels, or ointments. Start with a cost-effective choice, if ineffective or not tolerated by the patient, trial other cost-effective choices in a stepwise approach moving through the formulary.

Antimicrobials Emollients

Antimicrobials - Emollients containing antimicrobials should only be used only when infection is present and should be stopped once it is cleared.

Dermol® 500 (500ml pump) £6.04 (Contains known sensitisers.) Benzalkonium chloride 0.1%, chlorhexidine hydrochloride, 0.1%, isopropyl myristate 2.5%, liquid paraffin 2.5%.

If the most cost-effective choice emollients are not satisfactory for a patient after a trial, then all other emollients remain on formulary as patient choice is an important factor in the management of eczema and other skin conditions.
 HP- Hard paraffin. LP- Liquid paraffin. LLP- Light liquid paraffin. WSP- White soft paraffin.

	Cost effective brands	Active Ingredients <small>(See the formulary/ PIL for detailed ingredients)</small>	Contains known sensitisers?	Similar less cost-effective brands	
Creams - medium emollient					
Fully recyclable (including lid)	Epimax Original[®] cream £2.72 500g (flexi dispenser tube)	15% WSP 6% LP (SLS free) *See safety box above	Yes	Aqueous cream is NON-FORMULARY Cetraben [®] , Enopen [®] , Hydromol [®] , QV Cream [®] , Zerogent [®] , Zerobase [®] , Oilatum [®] / Junior [®] , Diprobase Advanced Eczema Cream [®] , Epaderm [®] . E45 [®] cream- NB Some may be allergic to lanolin.	
Fully recyclable (including lid)	Epimax ExCetra[®] cream £3.15 500g (flexi dispenser tube)	23.7% paraffin (LLP 10.5%/ WSP 13.2%)	Yes		
! For tubs- use a spoon/ spatula instead of fingers to minimise bacterial contamination. !					
	Aquamax[®] £3.99 500g (tub)	28% paraffin (LLP 8% / WSP 20%) (Free from SLS, Parabens & lanolin)	Yes		
	ZeroAQS[®] £3.39 500g (tub)	21% paraffin (LP 6%/ WSP 15%) (SLS free)	Yes		
	AproDerm[®] £4.95 500g (pump)	21% paraffin (15% WSP/ 6% LP) (SLS free)	Yes		
	ExoCream[®] £3.99 500ml (pump)	LLP 12.6% and WSP 14.5%, anhydrous Lanolin 1%	Yes		
Fully-recyclable (including lid)	Epimax[®] Moisturising cream £2.99 500g (flexi dispenser tube)	14.5% WSP, 12.6% LP, anhydrous lanolin 1% (SLS free)	Yes		
Airless pump- <2% wastage	Zerocream[®] £4.30 500g (pump)	LP 12.6%/ WSP 14.5%, anhydrous Lanolin 1%	Yes		
Oatmeal preparations – medium emollient					
Fully recyclable (including lid)	Epimax[®] Oatmeal Cream £3.10 500g (flexi dispenser tube)	Avena sativa Kernel Flour, LP 3.5%, WSP 0.75%.	Yes	Zeroveen [®] , Aveeno [®] Cream, Aproderm [®] Colloidal Oat (Paraffin Free.)	
	Miclaro[®] Oat Cream £3.99 500ml	Avena sativa kernel flour (1%), LP, WSP	Yes		
	Miclaro[®] Oat LOTION £3.99 500ml (pump)	Avena sativa kernel flour (1%), WSP	Yes		
Gels – medium emollient					
Fully recyclable (including lid)	Epimax[®] Isomol Gel £3.14 500g (flexi dispenser tube)	LP 15%, isopropyl myristate 15%	Yes	Doublebase [®] Gel, Zerodouble Gel [®] , HypoBase [®] .	
	AproDerm[®] Gel £3.99 500g (pump)	LP 15%, isopropyl myristate 15% (Less excipients than Doublebase [®] Gel.)	Yes		
	MyriBase Gel[®] £4.66 500ml (pump)	LP 15%, isopropyl myristate 15%	Yes		
Ointments – heavy emollient					
! For products in a tub or jar, patient should use a spoon/ spatula instead of fingers to minimise bacterial contamination. Burning and stinging is less likely with ointments.					
	Epimax[®] Eyelid ointment £2.35 4g tube	YSP 80%, LP 10% Wool fat (lanolin) 10%	No	No direct equivalent Epaderm [®] , Cetraben [®] , Emelpin [®] , QV Intensive [®] , Thirty:30 [®] , Hydrous [®] ointment.	
	Emulsifying ointment BP £4.15 500g (jar)	WSP 50%, Emulsifying wax 30 %, LP 20%.	Yes		
	Epimax[®] ointment £3.19 500g (tub)	LP 40%, YSP 30%, cetomacrogol emulsifying wax 30%	Yes		
	White Soft Paraffin £4.03 500g (jar)	100% WSP	No		
	Yellow Soft Paraffin solid 4.51(tub)	100% YSP	No		
	Fifty:50[®] £3.92 500g (jar)	White soft paraffin 50%, LP 50%	No		
	AproDerm[®] £3.95 500g (tub)	White Soft Paraffin 95%, LP 5%	No		
	Epimax[®] paraffin-free ointment £5.11 500g (tub)	Polyoxyethylene hydrogenated castor oil 38% w/w.	Yes		
	Dermipar[®] £4.92 500g (tub)	Cetomacrogol emulsifying wax, WSP and LP.	Yes		
	Zeroderm[®] £4.29 500g (tub)	LP 40%, WSP 30%.	Yes		
Lotions – light emollient					
	E45[®] Lotion £6.13 500ml (pump)	14% Paraffin (LLP 4%/ WSP 10%) Contains lanolin.	Yes	Cetraben [®] lotion, QV [®] skin lotion.	
Barrier preparations –					
Derma-S[®] and Derma Pro[®] - See the wound formulary for details.					
Creams containing urea –					
Products remain on formulary but are not cost effective with exception of GlucoRx Allpresan[®] diabetic foot foam.					
	GlucoRx Allpresan[®] diabetic foot foam cream Basic (5% urea): £9.75 (300ml) Intensive (10% urea): £9.75 (300ml)	Urea 5% (Basic: for dry/ sensitive skin) or urea 10% (Intensive: for very dry to chapped skin) Can be used on entire foot including between toes	Yes		
Less cost effective					
	imuDERM emollient[®] £6.85 500g (pump)	Urea 5% and Glycerine 5%; contains LP.	Yes	Aquadrate 10% [®] , E45 Itch Relief [®] , Flexitol Hand Balm [®] , Flexitol Skin Balm [®] , Hydromol Intensive [®] , Balneum [®] Plus, Flexitol Heel Balm [®] .	
	Flexitol[®] 10% Urea Cream £12.36 500g (pump)	Urea 10%	Yes		
	ClearZal[®] Hard Skin Remover £4.30 100g (tube)	Urea 7%, salicylic acid 4%, trichloroacetic acid 2%	Yes		
	Dermatonic[®] Once Heel Balm £9.52 200ml (tube)	25% urea	Yes		