

Dermatology Quick Reference Guide

Emollients should only be prescribed for the management of diagnosed dermatological conditions. Minor and moderate dry skin conditions are suitable for self-care.

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. Refer for self-care. Please see [NHS England OTC leaflet](#).



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* £4.99** (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](#)

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

[E45 Cream](#) This product **should not** be applied to the mucous membranes or to broken skin.

Prescribing Quantity Guidance [BNF Managing Skin Conditions](#) Advise the patient to use the emollient liberally and frequently (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.
	One month's supply	One month's supply	
Face	60-120g	400ml	
Both hands	100-200g	800ml	
Scalp	200-400g	800ml	
Both arms or legs	400-800g	800ml	
Trunk	1600g	2000ml	
Groin or genitalia	60-100g	400ml	

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 step-wise approach moving through the formulary.

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.



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](#).

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

Antimicrobials - Emollients containing antimicrobials should only be used only when infection is present and should be stopped once it is cleared.	Benzalkonium chloride 0.1%, chlorhexidine hydrochloride 0.1%, liquid paraffin 2.5%	Dermol [®] 500 (500ml pump) £6.04
---	--	--

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.

Dermatology Quick Reference Guide

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

Carbon friendly? 	Project Positive	Active Ingredients (See formulary/ PIL for skin sensitisers.)	Formulary equivalent project negative products	Similar formulary project negative products
Creams - medium emollient				
Widely recyclable	Epimax Original[®] cream £2.67 500g (flexi dispenser tube)	15% WSP 6% LP (SLS free)		Aqueous Non-formulary Enopen [®] , Hydromol [®] , QV Cream [®] , Zerogent [®] , Zerobase [®] , Oilatum [®] / Junior [®] , Diprobace, Advanced Eczema Cream [®] , Epaderm [®] cream
Widely recyclable	Epimax ExCetra[®] cream £3.09 500g (flexi dispenser tube)	23.7% paraffin (LLP 10.5%/ WSP 13.2%) (SLS free)	Cetraben [®] cream	
	Aquamax[®] £3.99 500g (tub- use a spoon/ spatula instead of fingers to minimise bacterial contamination.)	28% paraffin (LLP 8% / WSP 20%). (Free from SLS, Parabens & lanolin)		
	ZeroAQS[®] £3.39 500g (tub- use a spoon/ spatula instead of fingers to minimise bacterial contamination.)	21% paraffin (LP 6%/ WSP 15%) (SLS free)	Aqueous cream	
	AproDerm[®] £4.95 500g (pump)	21% paraffin (15% WSP/ 6% LP) (SLS free)		
	ExoCream[®] £3.99 500ml (pump)	LLP 12.6% and WSP 14.5%, anhydrous Lanolin 1%		
Widely recyclable	Epimax[®] Moisturising cream £2.99 500g (flexi dispenser tube)	14.5% WSP, 12.6% LP, anhydrous lanolin 1% (SLS free)	E45 [®] cream	NB Some may be allergic to lanolin
Airless pump=<2% wastage	Zerocream[®] £4.30 500g (pump)	LP 12.6%/ WSP 14.5%, anhydrous Lanolin 1%		
Oatmeal preparations – medium emollient				
Widely recyclable	Epimax[®] Oatmeal Cream £3.10 500g (flexi dispenser tube)	Avena sativa Kernel Flour, LP 3.5%, WSP 0.75%.	Zeroveen [®] Aveeno [®] Cream	Aproderm [®] - Colloidal Oat (Paraffin Free)
	Miclaro[®] Oat Cream £3.99 500ml	Avena sativa kernel flour (1%), LP, WSP		
	Miclaro[®] Oat lotion £3.99 500ml (pump)	Avena sativa kernel flour (1%), WSP		
Gels – medium emollient				
Widely recyclable	Epimax[®] Isomol Gel £3.08 500g (flexi dispenser tube)	LP 15%, isopropyl myristate 15%, less excipients than Doublebase [®] Gel.	Doublebase [®] Gel	Zerodouble Gel [®] HypoBase [®]
	AproDerm[®] Gel £3.99 500g (pump)			
	MyriBase Gel[®] £4.66 500ml (pump)	LP 15%, isopropyl myristate 15%		
Ointments – heavy emollient				
For products in a tub, patient should use a spoon/ spatula instead of fingers to minimise bacterial contamination Burning and stinging is less likely with ointments.				
	Emulsifying ointment BP £4.15 500g (jar)	WSP 50%, Emulsifying wax 30 %, LP 20%.		Cetraben [®] , Emelpin [®] , QV Intensive [®] , Thirty:30 [®] , Hydrous [®] ointment
	Epimax[®] ointment £3.13 500g (tub)	LP 40%, YSP 30%, cetomacrogol emulsifying wax 30%	Epaderm [®]	
	White Soft Paraffin £4.03 500g (jar)	100% WSP		
	Yellow Soft Paraffin solid £4.51 (tub)	100% YSP		
	Fifty:50[®] £3.92 500g (jar)	White soft paraffin 50%, LP 50%		
	AproDerm[®] £3.95 500g (tub)	White Soft Paraffin 95%, LP 5%		
	Epimax[®] paraffin free ointment £4.99 500g (tub)	Polyoxyethylene hydrogenated castor oil 38% w/w.		
	Dermipar[®] £4.92 500g (tub)	Cetomacrogol emulsifying wax, WSP and LP.		
	AquaDerm[®] ointment £4.15 500g (tub)	LP50%, WSP 50% (Please refer to manufacturer for availability)		
	Zeroderm[®] £4.29 500g (tub)	LP 40%, WSP 30%.		
Lotions – light emollient				
	E45[®] Lotion £5.82 500ml (pump)	14% Paraffin (LLP 4%/ WSP 10%) contains lanolin.	Cetraben [®] lotion	
	Miclaro[®] Oat lotion £3.99 500ml (pump)	Avena sativa kernel flour (1%), WSP	QV [®] skin lotion	
Barrier preparations –				
	Derma-S[®] and Derma Pro[®] - See wound formulary for details			
Creams containing Urea –				
Products remain on formulary but are not project positive 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		Aquadrate 10% [®] , E45 Itch relief [®] , Flexitol Hand Balm [®] , Flexitol Skin Balm [®] , Hydromol Intensive [®] , Balneum [®] Plus
	imuDERM emollient [®] £6.79 500g (pump)	Urea 5% and Glycerine 5%; contains LP.		
	Flexitol[®] 10% Urea Cream - £12.36 500g (pump)	Urea 10%		
	ClearZai[®] Hard Skin Remover £4.30 100g (tube)	Urea 7%, salicylic acid 4%, trichloroacetic acid 2%		
	Dermatonics[®] Once Heel Balm £9.44 200ml (tube)	25% urea	Flexitol Heel Balm [®]	

HP- Hard paraffin
LP- Liquid paraffin
LLP- Light liquid paraffin
WSP- White soft paraffin