

## General points

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This document is a starting point for patients who are not already using emollient therapy. Patients who are stable on an emollient that suits their skin should not be switched to an alternative product without prior consultation.

Prescribe an emollient according to the dryness of the skin, and individual preference/tolerance. The key to successful management is finding the correct balance between these factors, some patients may require more than one product at a time, e.g. a cream to apply during the day and an ointment for night time. The effectiveness and acceptability of a particular emollient may vary with time. If the person feels that a particular product is no longer suitable for them (or if they have developed a sensitivity to it), prescribe an alternative emollient. It may be necessary to try a range of emollients before a person settles on a product/combination.

- **Ointments** are preferable for dry skin because they are more effective than creams. However, compared with creams, they are more stiff and greasy products which may affect their acceptability (and compliance) for some people.
- **Creams** and **gels** are less effective emollients compared to ointments, but are more practicable. Since creams contain more ingredients than ointments, stinging is more common, especially if applied to inflamed skin.
- **Lotions** are more suitable for hairy skin, skin which is not very inflamed or for hotter days, when creams and ointments are perceived occlusive.
- Emollients containing active ingredients are not generally recommended because they increase the risk of skin reactions, and the evidence to support the use of active ingredients in emollients is limited. However, they may be useful in some people.
  - For example, products containing urea may improve skin hydration. It can enhance the moisture-retaining ability of emollients, thereby improving their efficacy, however it may sting especially if applied to inflamed skin.

The preferred products should:

- be included on the Scottish Drug Tariff
- not include any known irritants and allergens such as sodium lauryl sulphate (SLS), lanolin (wool fat), acrylates
- where possible, be available as a pump dispenser to minimise the risk of bacterial contamination. For ointments and creams that come in pots, advise that using a clean spoon or spatula (rather than fingers) to remove the ointment helps to minimise contamination.

## References

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- National Eczema Society. (2019, October). Emollients factsheet. Retrieved from <https://eczema.org/wp-content/uploads/Emollients-Oct-18-1.pdf>
- NICE Clinical Knowledge Summaries. (2018, January). *Eczema - atopic*. Retrieved from National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE): <https://cks.nice.org.uk/eczema-atopic>
- Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN). (n.d.). *SIGN 125: Management of atopic eczema in primary care*. Retrieved from Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN): <https://www.sign.ac.uk/our-guidelines/management-of-atopic-eczema-in-primary-care/>

<b>Ointments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Epimax Ointment</b> (125g - £1.92, 500g - £2.99)</li> <li>• <b>AproDerm Ointment</b> (50g - £1.45, 500g - £3.95)</li> <li>• <b>Zeroderm Ointment</b> (125g - £2.41, 500g - £4.10)</li> <li>• <b>Hydromol ointment</b> (500g - £4.96)</li> <li>• <b>Epimax Paraffin free Ointment</b> (500g - £4.99)</li> <li>• <b>Cetraben Ointment</b> (450g - £5.39)</li> </ul> <p><i>Note the above are alternatives to Diprobase ointment (500g - £5.99). Emulsifying ointment and Liquid Paraffin/White Soft Paraffin 50:50 ointment are considered less suitable for prescribing.</i></p>
<b>Creams</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Epimax Original Cream</b> (100g - £0.75, 500g - £2.49)</li> <li>• <b>AproDerm Emollient Cream</b> (50g - £1.70, 500g - £4.95)</li> <li>• <b>Zerobase</b> (50g - £1.04, 500g - £5.26)</li> <li>• <b>QV Cream</b> (100g - £2.08, 500g - £5.96, 1050g - £12.14)</li> <li>• <b>Cetraben Cream</b> (50g - £1.40, 500g - £5.99, 1050g - £11.62)</li> </ul> <p><i>Note the above are alternatives to Diprobase cream (500g - £6.32), E45 cream (500g - £5.99), Epaderm Cream (500g - £7.01)</i></p> <p><b>Colloidal Oatmeal Creams</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Epimax Oatmeal Cream</b> (100g - £1.99, 500g - £2.99)</li> <li>• <b>AproDerm Colloidal Oatmeal Cream</b> (100g - £2.74, 500g - £5.80)</li> <li>• <b>Zeroveen Cream</b> (100g - £2.74, 500g - £5.89)</li> </ul> <p><i>Note the above are alternatives to Aveeno Cream (500g - £6.47)</i></p> <p><b>Urea 5% Creams</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>imuDerm emollient</b> (500g - £6.62)</li> </ul> <p><i>Note the above is an alternative to E45 Itch Relief Cream (500g - £14.99) and Balneum Plus Cream (500g - £14.99)</i></p>
<b>Gels</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Epimax Isomol Gel</b> (100g - £1.99, 500g - £2.92)</li> </ul> <p><i>Note the above is an alternative to Doublebase gel (500g - £5.83) and Doublebase Dayleve gel (500g - £6.29)</i></p>
<b>Lotions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>QV Lotion</b> (250mL - £3.19, 500mL - £5.32)</li> <li>• <b>Cetraben Lotion</b> (200mL - £4.00, 500mL - £5.64)</li> </ul> <p><i>Note the above are alternatives to Aveeno Lotion (500mL - £6.66)</i></p>