

BNSSG Formulary Emollient Products for Adults and Children



Emollients should only be prescribed for long term dermatitis, eczema, psoriasis or other inflammatory conditions. A prescription for treatment of dry skin should not routinely be offered in primary care as the condition is appropriate for self-care.

Patients with mild dry skin can be successfully managed using over the counter products on a long-term basis.

All the products listed in this formulary can also be bought from community pharmacies. Advise patients to speak to their community pharmacist for advice.

Ointments- generally the greasiest preparations, being made up of oils or fats. They do not usually contain preservatives and may be more suitable for those with sensitivities.

Creams/gels- less greasy consistency, may be more clinically acceptable.

Lotions- have a higher water content than creams, which makes them easier to spread but less effective as emollients. They may be preferred for hairy areas of skin.

Spray- has a role where application without touching the skin is advantageous.

This [Moisturiser Decision Aid](#) for childhood eczema can be used with parents and children to help inform the treatment decision process

The following table provides an approximate guide to quantities to prescribe for an adult applying emollients twice a day. However, some patients will need to apply emollients more liberally and often and so higher quantities may be required, particularly if the emollient is being used as a soap substitute.

	Creams or ointments		Lotion	
	One week supply	One month supply	One week supply	One month supply
Face	15 - 30g	60-120g	100ml	400ml
Both hands	25 - 50g	100-200g	200ml	800ml
Scalp	50 - 100g	200-400g	200ml	800ml
Both arms or both legs	100 - 200g	400-800g	200ml	800ml
Trunk	400g	1600g	500ml	2000ml
Groins and genitalia	15 - 25g	60-100g	100ml	400ml

Flammability – Potential risk with all emollients, including paraffin-free. For further information see [MHRA Drug Safety Alert](#)

**Prescribers should use the clinically appropriate emollient with the lowest acquisition cost first line.
Please see 'BNSSG First Line Emollients' document for first line preferences.**

Green - for Any AHP to prescribe.

Blue – Second line. Any AHP to prescribe.

Consistency/ Formulation	Preferred Products	Advice/Criteria	Cost per 500ml/g*	Constituents
Very greasy ointment	White soft paraffin in liquid paraffin (50:50)	Severe dry skin secondary and/or acute flares secondary to a diagnosed dermatological condition . Low risk of sensitivity.	£4.57	LP 50% + WSP 50%
Ointment	Emulsifying ointment	Very dry skin or scaly patches requiring softening secondary to a diagnosed dermatological condition . Good for night-time.	£4.28	WSP 50% + EW 30% + LP 20% Excipients: cetostearyl alcohol, sodium lauryl sulfate
	Epimax ointment	Very dry skin or scaly patches requiring softening secondary to a diagnosed dermatological condition . Good for night-time.	£3.13	LP 40%+YSP 30% + cetomacrogol emulsifying wax cetostearyl alcohol + macrogol cetostearyl ether
	Epimax Paraffin-Free Ointment	Alternative ointment where paraffin-free formulation is required. STILL INCREASES FIRE RISK EVEN THOUGH PARAFFIN-FREE.	£4.99	Polyoxyethylene Hydrogenated Castor Oil 38% macrogol cetostearyl ether, medium chain triglycerides, polyoxypropylene stearyl ether, cetostearyl alcohol, hydrogenated castor oil, D&C Yellow/Red
	Cetraben ointment	Slightly reduced thickness ointment – ONLY FOR USE IF other ointments not appropriate or acceptable and therefore optimal use is restricted.	£6.30	WSP 35% + LLP 45% Cetostearyl Alcohol, Polysorbate 60
Creams	Epimax Original cream	Mild to moderate dry skin secondary to a diagnosed dermatological condition . Similar to Aqueous cream, but no SLS.	£2.67	WSP 15%, LP 6%, cetostearyl alcohol, polysorbate 60, phenoxyethanol and water
	Epimax ExCetra cream	Mild to moderate dry skin secondary to a diagnosed dermatological condition . Similar to Cetraben cream.	£3.09	WSP 13.2% + LP 10.5% + glycerol 4.5% + EW Excipients: cetostearyl alcohol, phenoxyethanol, Citric acid monohdrte, Trisodium citrate dihydrate, phenoxyethanol
	ZeroAQS cream	Mild to moderate dry skin secondary to a diagnosed dermatological condition . Similar to Aqueous cream, but no SLS.	£3.39	LP 6% + WSP 15% + macrogol cetostearyl ether 1.8% Excipients: cetostearyl alcohol, chlorocresol
	ZeroCream	Mild to moderate dry skin secondary to a diagnosed dermatological condition . Similar to E45 cream.	£4.30	LP 12.6%+WSP 14.5%, anhydrous lanolin 1% Glyceryl Monostearate, Cetyl Alcohol, Sodium Cetostearyl Sulfate, Citric Acid Monohydrate, Carbomer, Purified Water, Sodium Hydroxide, Sodium Methyl Hydroxybenzoate, Sodium Propyl Hydroxybenzoate, BHT.
	AproDerm Emollient Cream	Second line to Epimax emollients - ONLY FOR USE IF a pump container is required for patients with limited dexterity.	£4.95	WSP 15% + LP 6% Cetearyl Alcohol, Cetareth-20, Aqua, Sodium Dihydrogen Phosphate Dihydrate, Phenoxyethanol, Ethylhexylglycerin.
Gels	Epimax Isomol gel	Very light emollient for mild dry skin secondary to a diagnosed dermatological condition . Similar to Doublebase gel.	£3.08	Isopropyl myristate 15% + LP 15% glycerol, carbomer, polysorbate 20, triethanolamine, phenoxyethanol, ethylhexylglycerin and water
	AproDerm Gel	Second line to Epimax Isomol - ONLY FOR USE IF a pump container is required for patients with limited dexterity.	£3.99	Isopropyl Myristate 15+LP 15% Aqua, Glycerin, Polyacrylate-13, Polyisobutene, Polysorbate-20, Phenoxyethanol, Benzoic Acid, Dehydroacetic Acid, Ethylhexylglycerin
Lotion	E45 lotion	Lighter formulation emollient suitable for application to hairy areas, skin folds, face or scalp. Contains lanolin.	£4.90	WSP 10% + LLP 4%, hypoallergenic anhydrous lanolin 1% Excipients: benzyl alcohol, isopropyl palmitate, hydroxybenzoates (parabens)
	QV Skin lotion	ONLY FOR USE IF lanolin free lotion is needed. Lighter formulation emollient suitable for application to hairy areas, skin folds, face or scalp.	£5.47	Water, Glycerin, Petrolatum, C12-15 Alkyl Benzoate, Cetearyl Alcohol, Cetareth-20, Steareth-2, Dimethicone, Glyceryl Stearate, Methylparaben, Propylparaben, Dichlorobenzyl Alcohol, Polyacrylic Acid, Triethanolamine.
Emollients containing oatmeal	Epimax Oatmeal Cream	Useful for skin not tolerant of ointment or urea based products and also on skin with a history of sensitivity. Oatmeal acts as a humectant and is soothing for sensitive skin. Similar to Aveeno cream.	£3.10	Avena sativa kernel flour, liquid paraffin 3.5%, white soft paraffin 0.75%, glycerol, water, distearyldimonium chloride, isopropyl palmitate, cetostearyl alcohol, dimethicone, allantoin, isopropanol, octylododecanol, phenoxyethanol, ethylhexylglycerin, sodium chloride, benzyl alcohol
	AproDerm Colloidal Oatmeal Cream	Second line to Epimax Oatmeal - ONLY FOR USE IF a pump container is required for patients with limited dexterity or if a paraffin-free cream emollient required.	£5.80	Avena Sativa Kernel Flour, Purified Water, Apricot Kernel Oil, Glycerin, Sucrose Stearate, Cetearyl Alcohol, Glyceryl Stearate SE, Dimethicone, Phenoxyethanol, Vitamin F Ethyl Ester, Ethylhexylglycerin, Xanthan Gum, Disodium EDTA, Vitamin E.

Preparations containing anti-microbials	Dermol 500 lotion	Short term ACUTE SCRIPT ONLY. Use to during skin infection only. Should not routinely be prescribed as repeat.	£6.04	LP 2.5% + benzalkonium chloride 0.1% + chlorhexidine dihydrochloride 0.1% + isopropyl myristate 2.5% Excipients: cetostearyl alcohol, macrogol cetostearyl ether, phenoxyethanol and water
	Dermol Cream	Short term ACUTE SCRIPT ONLY. Patients with colonised eczema. Should not routinely be prescribed as repeat.	£6.63	LP 10% + benzalkonium chloride 0.1% + chlorhexidine dihydrochloride 0.1% + isopropyl myristate 10% Excipients: cetostearyl alcohol, glycerol, macrogol cetostearyl ether, phenoxyethanol, disodium phosphate dodecahydrate, sodium dihydrogen phosphate dihydrate and water.
Preparations containing urea	Balneum Intensiv Cream	Useful where a keratolytic/humectant is required e.g. hyperkeratosis, ichthyosis, extremely dry and/or fissured skin on hands and feet.	£9.97	Urea 5%, LP, Ceramide, Aqua, Glycine Soya Oil, Propylene Glycol, Cetearyl Alcohol, Isohexadecane, Sodium Lactate, Lactic Acid, PEG-20 Stearate, Polysorbate 60, Squalane, Stearic Acid, Disodium EDTA, Lecithin, Tocopherol, Ascorbyl Palmitate, Hydrogenated Palm Glycerides Citrate
	Ultraveen Itch relief Cream	ONLY FOR USE FOR very dry chronic inflammatory dermatological condition with associated significant irritation/itch that has not been responsive to or tolerant of other formulary emollient options.	£11.05	LP, Petrolatum, Urea, Dimethicone, Glycerin, Avena Sativa Kernel Flour, Cetearyl Alcohol, Glyceryl Stearate, Acrylates Copolymer, Lanolin Cera, Phenoxyethanol, Polyacrylate, Crosspolymer-6, 1,2-Hexanediol, Caprylyl glycol, Cera Alba, Benzyl Alcohol, Citric Acid, Ethylhexylglycerin, Water
	Balneum Plus Cream	ONLY FOR USE FOR significant idiopathic pruritus. May be used second line for significant pruritus with underlying dry chronic inflammatory dermatological condition not responsive to other urea-based emollients.	£14.99	Lauromacrogols 3.0% and Urea 5.0% LP, Glycerol, Dimethicone, Phenyl dimeticone, Cetylpalmitate, Stearic palmitic acid, Octyldodecanol, Polvsorbate, Carbomer, Trometamol, Benzyl alcohol, water
	Hydromol Intensive Cream	ONLY FOR USE FOR extreme hyperkeratosis or ichthyosis. May be used second line for extremely dry/fissured skin on hands and feet if not responsive to Balneum Cream.	£22.55 (£4.51 = 100g)	Urea 10% + WSP, Isopropyl myristate, maize starch, glyceryl tribehenate, palmitic acid, sorbitan laurate and polyoxyethylene fatty glyceride
	Dermatonics Once Heel Balm	ONLY FOR USE FOR diabetic patients at risk from ulceration following the BNSSG Dermatonics pathway.	£21.25 (£8.50=20 0ml)	25% urea, Lanolin Cera, Petrolatum, Glycerin, C12-15 Alkyl Benzoate, Cera Alba, Dimethicone, Acrylates Copolymer, Parfum, Phenoxyethanol, Ethylhexylglycerin, Triethanolamine, water
Spray emollient	Emollin	ONLY FOR USE FOR very painful/fragile skin where there is difficulty with 'hands on' application of creams/ointments or where a spray allows self-application negating need for DN/HCP visits.	£13.66 (£6.56 = 240ml)	LLP, + WSP, Hexamethyldisiloxane
Creams containing menthol	Dermacool Cream	Useful for immediate itch relief to localised sites in patients with pruritic conditions such as nodular prurigo/generalised or local pruritus. Not to be used extensively due to risk of extreme cold sensation.	2% £18.16 5%£18.70	0.5%/1%/2% / 5% Menthol, LP, Petrolatum, Cetearyl Alcohol, Phenoxyethanol, Sodium Lauryl Sulfate , water

*Prices taken from DM+D October 2022

Soap substitute	<p>Bath and shower emollients offer no advantages over emollients. Patients can use any of their normal creams or ointment above as a soap substitute in the bath/shower; except 50:50 (since it may not lather well).</p> <p>Bath and shower preparations for dry and pruritic skin conditions should not be routinely prescribed as per NHS England guidelines https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/annex-b-sps-evidence-review-bath-emollients.pdf</p> <p>Specialists may use their clinical judgement to consider bath/shower emollients for specific patients e.g. noncompliance with regular emollients of more than one emollient/type or patients with painful skin conditions who cannot tolerate emollient creams/ointments. The reasons for prescribing need to be clearly documented.</p>
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(LP = Liquid Paraffin, WSP = White Soft Paraffin, EW = Emulsifying Wax, WP = White Paraffin, LLP = Light Liquid Paraffin, YSP = Yellow Soft Paraffin)

MHRA published a [Field Safety Notice](#) linking **cetostearyl alcohol** (an excipient of some Epimax products and a number of other emollients) to eye-related toxicity and corneal epithelial loss. Please ensure patients using emollients containing cetostearyl alcohol are aware to avoid contact of these products with their eyes and wash their hands after use. 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](#).