

Sheffield skin formulary choices: Abbreviated guide to emollients used in primary care

- Emollients are important in the management of atopic eczema and should be used regularly by all patients even when skin is clear.
- Choice of preparation should be based on severity of condition (a stepped approach), patient preference and site of application. Management can then be stepped up or down, according to the severity of symptoms.
- Prescribing of emollients for non-clinical cosmetic purposes is not recommended and should be reviewed. Mild dry skin can be managed via self-care. If their current emollient causes irritation or is not acceptable, offer a different way to apply it or offer an alternative emollient.
- Promote patient [self-care](#) in the management of their skin conditions. See [appendix 4](#) of Sheffield formulary for available OTC products.
- Do not prescribe bath emollients or additives unless recommended by specialist dermatology services. See criteria in the [Sheffield STOP guidance](#). Consider using emollients suitable as soap substitutes or bath additives from the table below.
- People with eczema should be advised to wash with a regular leave-on emollient as a soap substitute. Note that emollients used as soap substitutes or bath additives may make surfaces slippery and block drains. Please refer to the guide below for choices.
- For detailed guidance refer to [NICE CG57](#) Management of atopic eczema in children from birth up to the age of 12 years.
- Fire hazard with emollients: Bandages, dressings, bedding and clothing in contact with paraffin-based products are easily ignited with a naked flame or cigarette. Data suggests, there is also a risk with paraffin-free emollients. Advise patients to keep away from fire and flames and not to smoke when using these preparations. Further information is available [here](#) and on [MHRA website](#).
- Sufficient quantities should be prescribed - for more guidance see [BNF](#).
- Children with atopic eczema should be prescribed sufficient quantities (250-500g weekly) unperfumed emollients for daily use.
- For information on ACBS criteria restrictions see [BNF](#).
- See [NHS Choices](#) and [National Eczema Society](#) for more educational resources.
- Tables 1-5 have been constructed using available information from pharmaceutical companies, drug tariff and patient information leaflets available at the time. However, prescribers should prioritise advice from specialist clinics, where appropriate.
- Choices have been made using multiple factors such as safety, cost-effectiveness, available ingredient information, supply availability and impact on [greener NHS initiative](#). These choices and prices will be updated annually.
- It is prescribers' responsibility to choose an appropriate emollient for treating patients' conditions. Tables 1-5 should be used together with [skin formulary](#). See below for first line choices and alternatives for [creams](#), [ointments](#), [gels](#), [lotions](#) and [colloidal oat emollients](#).

Abbreviations	Full phrase
WSP	White soft paraffin
LLP	Light liquid paraffin
LP	Liquid paraffin
YSP	Yellow soft paraffin
SLS	Sodium Lauryl sulfate









Creams															
Formulary Choice	Product	Cost per 500g/ml	Lipid concentration	Greasiness	Fragrance free	Lanolin free	SLS free	Cetostearyl alcohol free	Soap* substitute	Bath additive	Paraben free	Suitable from birth	Paraffin free	Fully recyclable	Vegan
1 st Line	Epimax [®] original	£2.72	WSP 15%/ LP 6%	 Medium	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	X	✓	✓	X	✓	✓
2 nd Line	Epimax [®] excetra	£3.15	WSP 13.2%/ LP 10.5%	 Medium	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	X	✓	✓	X	✓	✓
3 rd Line	ZeroAQS [®]	£3.39	WSP 15%/ LP 6%	 Medium	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	X	✓	X (1 year onwards)	X	X	✓
Alternatives	Aquamax [®] cream	£3.99	WSP 20%/ LP 8%	 Medium	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X	✓	✓	X	X	X
	Exocream [®]	£3.99	WSP 14.5% / LLP 12.6% / anhydrous lanolin 1%	 Medium	✓	X	✓	X	✓	X	X	✓	X	X	X
	Zerocream [®] cream	£4.30	WSP 10%/ LP 11%	 Medium	✓	X	✓	X	✓	X	X	X (1 year onwards)	X	X	X
	AproDerm [®] emollient cream	£4.95	WSP 15%/LP 6%	 Medium	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	X	✓	✓	X	X	✓
	Cetraben [®] cream	£6.29	WSP 13.2% / LLP 10.5%	 Medium	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	X	✓	X (1 year onwards)	X	X	✓

Table 1: Sheffield skin formulary products for creams.

Information above was constructed using manufacturers advice and available information at the time. Please consult manufacturers product information for any further details.

*Soap substitute is an emollient used instead of soaps and at times referred to as body wash substitute. Avoid application to and around eyes.








Ointments															
Formulary choice	Product	Cost per 500g	Lipid concentration	Greasiness	Fragrance free	Lanolin free	SLS free	Cetostearyl alcohol free	Soap* substitute	Bath additive	Paraben free	Suitable from birth	Paraffin free	Fully recyclable	Vegan
1 st line	Fifty:50 ointment	£3.92	WSP 50%/ LP 50%	 Very greasy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓
2 nd line	AproDerm [®] ointment	£3.95	WSP 95%/ LP 5%	 Very greasy	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	X	X	✓
3 rd line	Zeroderm [®] ointment	£4.29	WSP 30%/ LP 40%	 Very greasy	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	X (1 year onwards)	X	X	✓
Alternatives	Hydromol [®] ointment	£5.50	LP 40% / YSP 30% / emulsifying wax 30%	 Very greasy	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	X (not specified)	X	X	X
	Cetraben [®] ointment	£5.67	LLP 45% / WSP 35%	 Very greasy	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	X (1 year onwards)	X	X	✓
	QV Intensive [®] Ointment	£5.94	LLP 50% / WSP 50%	 Very greasy	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X	✓	✓	X	X	✓
	Epaderm [®] ointment	£6.89	LP 40% / YSP 30% / emulsifying wax 30%	 Very greasy	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X

Table 2: Sheffield skin formulary products for ointments.

Information above was constructed using manufacturers advice and available information at the time. Please consult manufacturers product information for any further details.

*Soap substitute is an emollient used instead of soaps and at times referred to as body wash substitute. Avoid application to and around eyes.




Gels															
Formulary choice	Product	Cost per 500g	Lipid concentration	Greasiness	Fragrance free	Lanolin free	SLS free	Cetostearyl alcohol free	Soap* substitute	Bath additive	Paraben free	Suitable from birth	Paraffin free	Fully recyclable	Vegan
1 st line	Epimax® isomol gel	£3.14	LP15% / Isopropyl myristate 15%	 Greasy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	X	✓	✓
2 nd line	AproDerm® gel	£3.99	LP 15% / Isopropyl Myristate 15%	 Greasy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	X	X	✓
3 rd line	MyriBase® Gel	£4.66	LP 15% / Isopropyl Myristate 15%	 Greasy	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	X	X	X
Alternatives	Zerodouble® gel	£5.14	LP 15% / Isopropyl Myristate 15%	 Greasy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	X (1 year onwards)	X	X	✓
	HypoBase® gel	£5.83	LP 15% / Isopropyl Myristate 15%	 Greasy	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	X	X	X

Table 3: Sheffield skin formulary products for gels.

Information above was constructed using manufacturers advice and available information at the time. Please consult manufacturers product information for any further details.

*Soap substitute is an emollient used instead of soaps and at times referred to as body wash substitute. Avoid application to and around eyes.



Lotions															
Formulary choice	Product	Cost per 500g	Lipid concentration	Greasiness	Fragrance free	Lanolin free	SLS free	Cetostearyl alcohol free	Soap* substitute	Bath additive	Paraben free	Suitable from birth	Paraffin free	Fully recyclable	Vegan
1 st line	QV® skin lotion	£5.51	Petrolatum	 Light	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X	X	✓	X	X	✓
2 nd line	Cetraben® lotion	£5.84	LLP 4% / WSP 5%	 Light	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X	✓	X (1 year onwards)	X	X	✓

Table 4: Sheffield skin formulary products for lotions.





Colloidal oat emollients															
Formulary choice	Product	Cost per 500g	Lipid concentration	Greasiness	Fragrance free	Lanolin free	SLS free	Cetostearyl alcohol free	Soap* substitute	Bath additive	Paraben free	Suitable from birth	Paraffin free	Fully recyclable	Vegan
1 st line	Epimax® oatmeal cream	£3.16	LP 3.5%/WSP 0.75%, Avena Sativa Kernel Flour 1%	 Light	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	X	✓	✓	X	✓	✓
2 nd line	Miclaro® oat cream	£4.24	Avena Sativa Kernel Flour 1%/WSP/LP	 Light	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	X	✓	X (3 months onwards)	X	X	X
3 rd line	Aproderm® colloidal oat cream	£5.80	Avena Sativa Kernel Flour 1%	 Light	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
Alternative	Zeroveen® cream	£6.13	LP 6% / WSP	 Light	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	X	✓	X (1 year onwards)	X	X	✓

Table 5: Sheffield skin formulary products for colloidal oat emollients.

Information above was constructed using manufacturers advice and available information at the time. Please consult manufacturers product information for any further details.

*Soap substitute is an emollient used instead of soaps and at times referred to as body wash substitute. Avoid application to and around eyes.