

## **Patient information about changes to medicines or treatments on the NHS: [Changes to prescribing of bath and shower preparations for dry and itchy skin conditions](#)**

The NHS is asking prescribers to stop or greatly reduce the prescribing of some treatments. This is because the treatments are:

- Not as safe as other treatments OR
- Not as good (effective) as other treatments OR
- More expensive than other treatments that do the same thing.

**This includes bath and shower preparations.**

This document will explain why the changes are happening and where you can get more information and support.

### **[Why does the NHS want to reduce the prescribing of bath and shower preparations?](#)**

NHS guidance states that bath and shower emollient (moisturising) products should not be routinely prescribed by the NHS for dry and itchy skin conditions (e.g. eczema symptoms). There is no quality evidence to show that they are more effective than leave-on emollient preparations.

### **[Which bath and shower preparations are affected?](#)**

This change affects bath and shower preparations containing bath oils and bath and shower emollient products that are used to wash the body.

### **[What options are available instead of these bath and shower preparations?](#)**

Leave-on emollients (except for liquid and white soft paraffin 50:50 ointment) can be used as a soap substitute in place of bath and shower preparations. These can be used for handwashing, showering, or in the bath. Emollients do not foam like normal soap but are just as effective at cleaning the skin.

It is still important to use leave-on emollient moisturisers and avoid soap. This will be discussed with you at your next medication review, and these will continue to be prescribed.

[Items which should not routinely be prescribed in primary care – Bath and shower preparations for dry and itchy skin conditions](#)

How to use leave on emollients as a soap substitute: Mix a small amount (around one teaspoon) of emollient in the palm of your hand with a little warm water and spread it over damp or dry skin. Rinse and pat the skin dry, being careful not to rub it.

If you wish to still use bath and shower emollient products, these are available for you to purchase over the counter at your local pharmacy.

### Where can I find more information and support?

- You can speak to your local pharmacist, GP, or the person who prescribed the medication to you.
- NHS website has information on emollient preparations <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/emollients/>
- The Patients Association can also offer support and advice: [www.patients-association.org.uk/](http://www.patients-association.org.uk/) or freephone 0800 345 7115
- Healthwatch is an online resource where you can feedback on your healthcare experiences: [www.healthwatch.co.uk](http://www.healthwatch.co.uk)

Find out more about the medicines that are being stopped or reduced:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/medicines/items-which-should-not-be-routinely-prescribed>