

## Applying Emollients



### Tips & Advice

### Explanation

When using an emollient for the **first time test** a small amount on an area of skin and leave for **48 hours**. If there is no reaction or irritation apply all over the affected area of skin

Some people may be sensitive to **certain ingredients** found in the emollient and so react to them. Testing a small area limits any potential reaction to the test area alone and so doesn't aggravate skin that is already sensitive and irritated

Keep finger **nails short & smooth**

Keeping finger nails short and smooth **prevents accidental damage** to the skin surface when applying emollients or scratching (although scratching should be avoided). **Long nails** can also harbour **bacteria** under them, which, along with the bacteria **staphylococcus** (found on the skin) and other pathogens, can enter broken and irritated skin causing further **irritation, inflammation and infection**

**Wash hands** before applying emollients

This **removes bacteria**, which are invisible to the eye, from your hands thus reducing the risk of infection

**Pump dispensers** reduce the risk of product contamination

**Pump dispensers eliminate** the need to use your fingers to scoop out the emollient from the container so stopping the **bacteria**, found on fingers and possibly under the nails, from getting into the emollient and subsequently into the broken skin of an eczema, psoriasis or dry skin sufferer

Always use a **clean spoon** to scoop out emollients that come in **tubs** and transfer the amount required into a clean container or plate and use from there

Putting your hands into a tub of emollient can cause **bacterial contamination** of the product, which can subsequently get into broken, irritated skin. By using a **clean spoon** to take out the exact amount needed minimises contact with the emollient

Emollients should be **applied regularly, liberally** and frequently (**at least three times a day**)

The effects of emollients don't last long so they need to be **applied frequently**. Regular emollient application keeps the skin **protected** and **hydrated** and can **reduce** the need for **steroid creams**. It is important to note that you cannot overuse emollients so they should be applied liberally and as often as needed

Apply emollients **downwards** in the **direction of hair growth**

This reduces the risk of **blocking hair follicles** and causing **folliculitis – inflammation** of the hair follicles

Emollients should be applied using **gentle strokes**

**Vigorous** strokes or **rubbing** can generate **heat** making the skin itchy and irritated, which can lead to scratching so exacerbating the **itch-scratch** cycle

Continue applying emollients after your **skin has improved**

This continues to help hydrate and protect the skin and **reduces the risk of flare ups**

Apply **greasy emollients at night**

Greasy emollients are good for night time use as they **last longer**. Some people also prefer to put them on at night time as they are **messy** and can **transfer onto clothing**

Apply **greasy** emollients on **very dry** or **thickened** skin

As greasy **emollients hydrate** the skin **more** than creams they are ideal for very dry and thickened skin

Apply emollients at least **20 minutes** **before bedtime**

This allows **time** for the emollient to **absorb into** the skin before you or your child goes to sleep

Keep your **child occupied** whilst trying to put on their emollient

It's difficult to get a child to sit still at the best of times, let alone while you are trying to put emollients on them. Visit our **Kids Zone** at [www.aproderm.com/kids-zone](http://www.aproderm.com/kids-zone) for some **fun, interactive games** to help your child **learn** about their **eczema** and keep them occupied whilst you put their emollient on

Many emollients contain **paraffin** and when using these you should keep away from **fire**, including any naked flames and cigarettes

Emollients can get soaked into dressings and clothes. As paraffin is easily ignited with a naked flame it is important to keep away from fire when using paraffin containing emollients