

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 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