

## Position Statement: Prescribing of emollients and soap substitutes

As part of its self-care strategy, in line with National Guidance, NHS Mansfield and Ashfield and NHS Newark and Sherwood Clinical Commissioning Groups no longer support the prescribing of emollients in patients with mild dry skin and no diagnosed dermatological condition (examples of a diagnosed dermatological condition includes: severe dermatitis, eczema or psoriasis). Prescribing may be appropriate where there is significant risk to skin integrity.

This should be guided by professional judgement and clinical assessment.

Those patients without a diagnosed dermatological condition requesting a general skin moisturiser should be advised to purchase these items over the counter (OTC).

Bath additives and shower gels are *not* recommended for prescribing in any circumstances due to lack of evidence of efficacy.

### Recommendations for self care:

- All patients currently prescribed an emollient for mild dry skin, for which there is no documented dermatological condition (as defined above), i.e. personal care should be reviewed with a view to stopping prescribing and an OTC product for self-care recommended instead. Prescribing of emollients for such purposes is not appropriate and therefore should not be prescribed in any circumstances.
- Clinical judgement should be used when considering whether it is acceptable to ask a patient to purchase their medication OTC. See the full National Guidelines for general exceptions to self-care, see links below.

### Rationale:

- Mild dry skin has been classified as appropriate for self-care by NHS England following the national consultation on conditions for which OTC items should not be routinely prescribed. Patients with mild dry skin should not be prescribed an emollient and instead encouraged to manage their condition using OTC products on a long-term basis.

### Recommendations for prescribing emollients for patients with a diagnosed dermatological condition:

- Existing patients prescribed a non-formulary emollient for a diagnosed skin condition should be reviewed with a view to trialling a preferred formulary emollient after discussion with the patient.
- Where prescribing is appropriate, prescribers should select the formulary option with the lowest acquisition cost wherever possible depending on severity of symptoms, patient preference and site of application.

### Bath additives and shower gels:

- Bath additives and shower gels are *not* recommended for prescribing due to lack of evidence of efficacy. Most topical emollients can be used as a soap substitute. Care must be taken when using emollients in the bath as they may make surfaces slippery.

Any patient queries or complaints should be directed to the CCGs Patient Engagement Team on 0800 028 3693; email [NSHCCG.Pet-North@nhs.net](mailto:NSHCCG.Pet-North@nhs.net) or in writing to Patient Experience Team, NHS Newark and Sherwood Clinical Commissioning Group, Balderton Primary Care Centre, Lowfield Lane, Balderton, Nottinghamshire NG24 3HJ

**References:**

Please refer patients to NHS choices for further information:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/emollients/>

Nottinghamshire emollients formulary can be found using this link:

<http://www.nottsapc.nhs.uk/media/1178/emollient-formulary.pdf>

The full National Guidelines: Conditions for which over the counter items should not be routinely be prescribed in Primary Care; Guidance for CCGs can be found at:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/otc-guidance-for-ccgs.pdf>