

# Medicines Optimisation intervention brief

## Medicines Optimisation Incentive Scheme Intervention 19/20

<b>TITLE?</b>
Deprescribe bath and shower emollients.
<b>WHAT?</b>
In June 2019 NHS England <sup>1</sup> issued the following recommendations regarding bath and shower emollients: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prescribers in primary care should not initiate bath and shower emollients for any new patient.</li> <li>CCGs should support prescribers in deprescribing bath and shower preparations and substitute with 'leave-on' emollients.</li> </ul>
<b>WHY?</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is no data to suggest that emollient bath or shower preparations provide any clinical benefit.</li> <li>The BATHE trial found that pouring emollient additives into the bath provided no additional benefit over standard eczema care for children.</li> <li>It is recognised that the BATHE trial looked at use in children. However, in the absence of other good quality evidence it was agreed that it is acceptable to extrapolate this to also apply to adults until good quality evidence emerges.</li> <li>Soap avoidance and 'leave-on' emollient moisturisers can still be used for treating eczema. These emollients can also be used as a soap substitute.</li> <li>Few patients with severe eczema were included in the BATHE study. Severity of disease can be assessed with the Patient Orientated Eczema Measure (POEM) tool, as used in this study.</li> <li>Antimicrobial ingredients in emollients can cause sensitisation and an eczematous reaction.</li> <li>Antimicrobial-containing emollients should be avoided unless infection is present or a frequent complication. Long-term use should be avoided.</li> <li>Bath and shower emollients are prescribed at a cost of around £146,000 per annum in the West Hampshire CCG area.</li> </ul>
<b>WHO?</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All patients currently prescribed bath or shower emollients</li> <li>All patients who need to be initiated on emollients</li> </ul>
<b>TIPS?</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emollients are medical moisturisers used to treat eczema. They are different from cosmetic moisturisers in that they should be unperfumed.</li> <li>Patients should be counselled on the use of any emollients and the associated risks (see resources for patients).</li> <li>Leave-on emollients should be prescribed in large quantities (250-500g weekly).</li> </ul> <p>NB: Aqueous cream is no longer recommended as a soap substitute or 'leave-on' emollient.</p>



## HOW?

- Run the standard search on the practice clinical system to identify all patients currently prescribed bath or shower emollients
- Agree the process for deprescribing these items with the practice
- Optimise the use of 'leave-on' emollients
  - Ensure patient has access to a sufficient quantity of 'leave-on' emollient
  - Provide the patient with access to resources that aid effective use of emollients

## SO WHAT?

- Emollient regimen optimised – ineffective prescribing avoided and potential for better control of condition with a subsequent reduction in use of topical steroids.
- Cost savings realised

## FURTHER INFORMATION

1. Items which should not routinely be prescribed in primary care: Guidance for CCGs Version 2, June 2019 <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/items-which-should-not-routinely-be-prescribed-in-primary-care-v2.1.pdf>
2. PrescQIPP Bulletin 244: Bath and shower emollient preparations
3. BATHE trial to determine the clinical and cost-effectiveness of adding bath emollient to the standard management of atopic eczema in children.  
<https://www.southampton.ac.uk/bathe/news/2018/05/batheresults.page>
4. Clinical evidence for emollient bath and shower preparation. March 2019. Specialist Pharmacy Service. <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/annex-b-sps-evidence-review-bath-emollients.pdf>
5. NICE Clinical Guideline 57: Atopic eczema in under 12s: diagnosis and management (Dec 2007, update in progress) <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg57>
6. WHCCG Policy Statement reference no. [PS019](#)

### Additional resources

7. POEM <https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/research/groups/cebd/resources/poem.aspx>
8. Video to explain the BATHE study  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tpgnNOhXgl8&feature=youtu.be>
9. Primary Care Dermatology Society step-by-step guide <http://www.pcds.org.uk/clinical-guidance/atopic-eczema#management>
10. Emollient factsheet - National Eczema Society <http://www.eczema.org/emollients>

