



**Norfolk and Waveney**

Integrated Care Board

NHS Norfolk and Waveney ICB  
Medicines Optimisation Team  
Floor 8 County Hall  
Martineau Lane  
Norwich  
Norfolk  
NR1 2DH

<Date>

Private and Confidential

<Patient Name>

<Patient Address>

Dear < insert patient name >

### **National Policy Change – Bath and Shower Products**

The local NHS, Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board, regularly review the medicines prescribed to ensure that our local doctors are using the most effective and good value medicines.

NHS England no longer recommends the supply **bath or shower products** on prescription as there is no evidence of benefit from using these. A trial published in the British Medical Journal showed that there was no information to prove that using these helps improve dry skin conditions such as eczema.

It is now recommended that simple creams and ointments (also called emollients or moisturisers) prescribed for clinical conditions such as eczema and psoriasis, can be used instead for washing. As a result, your **bath oil / shower gel** has now been removed from your repeat list. If you still wish to use these products, they are widely available to buy.

Any decision to change prescribing policy is not taken lightly; it is our responsibility to provide the best value for money for all our patients. To meet that duty, we need to make sure we commission cost-effective prescribing which will have the greatest impact on the largest number of people.

Should you require more information about this, please contact the Contact Us Team at [nwicb.contactus@nhs.net](mailto:nwicb.contactus@nhs.net) , they will be able to put you in contact with the appropriate person.

**Yours sincerely**



**Dr Andrew Douglass MBBS MRCGP**  
**Specialty Advisor for Prescribing and Elective Recovery**  
**NHS Norfolk and Waveney ICB**

### **Appendix 1: Using emollients (moisturisers) as soap substitutes.**

A recent study investigated the use of special emollients (moisturisers) for mixing with bath water when bathing. The investigators found that these products did not improve the condition of the skin compared to using normal emollients applied directly to the skin when washing. Experts agree that most patients do not need a special bath product as long as they are using their normal emollient as a soap substitute.

#### **How to use emollients as soap substitutes:**

- Most emollients can be used as a soap substitute (except white soft paraffin alone). Use the product you have been advised or the one you find works best if specific advice has not been given.
- To use when washing, put a half to one teaspoonful in the palm of your hand and mix with a small amount of warm water. This can then be applied to wet skin and rinsed off with water.
- If having a bath or shower, creams, lotions or gels can be rubbed 'neat' directly into the skin and then rinsed off with water.
- If using a thick ointment in the bath or shower, this should be mixed with a small amount of water and applied to wet skin.
- Soap substitutes do not lather, but they are still effective in cleaning the skin.
- Emollients can make the bath or shower cubicle slippery so take care.
- Clean the bath or shower cubicle after use with washing-up liquid and hot water to prevent build-up.