

Patients who are at risk of fires occurring will be referred for a Safe and Well visit by the Fire Service:

- Free smoke detection may be fitted, if required. Some households may already have mains or battery operated smoke detection. It is recommended that Fire Service personnel through the Safe and Well visit assess whether further protection be provided.
 - Risk assessments will consider the individual's environment, behaviours and the risk they pose to others, not just themselves. The difference between a hospital, residential care setting and the home will be taken into account.
 - Fire retardant bedding may be provided to reduce fire risk with adequate amounts to account for a change of bedding during laundry.
 - When caring for householders with limited mobility, consideration should be given to the provision of inter-linked smoke alarms connected into a tele-care, care-call or life-line type system.
 - Patients, families and carers can also make a referral for a Safe and Well Visit.
- The advice line is **0115 838 8100** and referrals can be made online at **www.notts-fire.gov.uk/staying-safe/safe-and-well-visits**

If you would like this information in another language or format such as larger print, please contact: **0800 561 2121**

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان یا صورت میں جیسا کہ بڑے حروف میں درکار ہو تو برائے مہربانی اس نمبر پر رابطہ کیجئے: **0800 561 2121**

Jeżeli życzy sobie Pan/Pani otrzymać niniejsze informacje w innym języku lub formacie, takim jak dużą czcionką, należy zadzwonić pod nr tel.: **0800 561 2121**

در صورت تمایل به داشتن این اطلاعات به زبانی دیگر یا فرمی دیگر، به طور مثال، چاپ بزرگ تر، لطفاً با شماره تلفن: **۰۸۰۰۵۶۱۲۱۲۱** تماس بگیرید

Getting in touch with CityCare

You can feed back any compliments, concerns, complaints or comments by:

T: 0115 883 9654 E: ncp.customercare@nhs.net W: www.nottinghamcitycare.nhs.uk

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Registered address: Aspect House, Aspect Business Park, Bennerley Road, Bulwell, Nottingham, NG6 8WR

Version: 3 Ratified: 07/12/2021 Expiry Date: 25/12/2025 Service: Tissue Viability



Safety advice for people and carers who use emollient creams or ointments



What is an emollient

Emollient creams are treatments applied to the skin and are used to treat dry skin conditions anywhere on the body. These conditions can include eczema, psoriasis and in elderly patients aging skin can become dry and fragile. People will have emollients recommended routinely for skin care on the legs and feet. They will also be recommended to wash in emollients as a soap substitute. Emollients work by reducing water loss from skin by covering it with a protective film. They should be applied in the direction of hair growth and any build up of layers of emollients should be prevented.

Why have concerns been raised?

Most emollients contain a paraffin base and there are fire risks associated with the use of paraffin-based or paraffin containing emollients and creams. Paraffin-based products could include, for example, white soft paraffin, liquid paraffin and emulsifying ointment, which in other contexts can be used to fuel fire. Even emollients without these ingredients can also pose a flammability risk if clothes and bedding become soaked in them.

There have been accidents resulting in people suffering burns reported to the Department of Health and the use of an emollient has contributed to the injury.

People using a paraffin-based emollient product often will have their skin covered with a dressing or clothing, which can become soaked in the emollient and there is a danger that smoking or using a naked flame could cause these dressings or clothing to catch fire.

There may also be transfers of emollients and fibres of dressings to clothing and items such as towels when used to carry out personal care which can make them more flammable.

These concerns have arisen from a relatively small but serious number of incidents in which people have sustained burns, and in some cases fatal injuries, from fires caused by the paraffin ingredients.

If you use oxygen therapy this is an additional fire risk and emollients with a low level of paraffin should be used.

Make sure you tell the person who is providing or prescribing the emollients if you or people in your house smoke, even occasionally, or if you are exposed to naked flames or fire risks as this could affect the type of emollient that is recommended for you. Emollients with a low or no paraffin content are available.

- People who are using emollient creams are advised:
 - not to smoke
 - not to use naked flames
 - store away from heat
 - not to go near anyone smoking or using naked flames
 - not to leave open tubes and tubes of emollients lying around
- Change people's clothing and bedding regularly because emollients soak into fabric and can become a fire hazard.
- If you have a life-line call system we recommend you wear it especially at times when there is no one with you.
- People using oxygen therapy are advised to use a water soluble lubricant such as KY gel to rehydrate their lips and nose.

- Individuals who smoke should be made aware of the added fire risk associated with smoking and using emollient creams and, if smoking cannot be avoided, smoking should be made as safe as possible by:
 - not smoking if under the influence of drugs or alcohol
 - securing the holding of the cigarette, for patients unable to hold a cigarette safely
 - not allowing ash to fall on any emollient soaked fabric
 - putting water or sand in ashtrays
 - closing ash trays with a lid if possible to ensure cigarettes are extinguished

General Fire Safety Advice

- **Keep ignition sources away from the bedding** and mattress or any bedding or clothing likely to be impregnated with emollient cream.
- **Don't smoke in, or on the bed.**
If an individual is insistent on smoking they should smoke away from the bed and mattress and only when a capable person is with them to offer immediate assistance if required. Smoking when wearing clothing impregnated with emollient cream must not be undertaken.
- **Don't burn candles in the room** where the bed or mattress is kept or in proximity to any items impregnated with emollient creams.
- **Don't have electrical equipment in the vicinity** of the bed, mattress or any bedding or clothing likely to be impregnated with emollient cream.
- **Don't use electric blankets** in combination with the bed, mattress or any bedding or clothing likely to be impregnated with emollient cream.
- **Don't overload plug sockets.**
- **Ensure essential electrical items are maintained and switched off** and unplugged at the mains when not in use.
- **Don't have fires and heaters in the vicinity** of the bed, mattress or any bedding or clothing likely to be impregnated with emollient cream.
- **Don't place hot items such as hairdryers or heated hairstyling appliances**, on the bed, mattress or any bedding or clothing likely to be impregnated with emollient cream.
- **If you use a mobility aid, keep it within reach so you can move away from a fire.**

Type of emollient recommended

Type	How often to apply	Instructions