

What are Emollients?

Emollients are moisturising treatments applied directly to the skin to soothe and hydrate it. They cover the skin with a protective film to trap in moisture.

They may contain:

- Paraffin
- Shea Butter
- Cocoa Butter
- Beeswax
- Lanolin
- Nut Oil
- Mineral Oils

These emollients are not flammable in themselves, but the risk occurs when they absorb into fabrics and are then exposed to naked flames or heat sources resulting in a fire that burns quickly and intensely and can cause serious injury or death.



Types of Emollients?

Emollients can be found within many products that can be both prescribed and purchased over the counter.

Products can include:

- Lotions
- Sprays
- Creams
- Ointments
- Soap Substitutes e.g. shower gels
- Leave on Products

ROYAL BERKSHIRE **FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

-  RoyalBerksFRS
-  @RBFRSOfficial
-  RoyalBerkshireFire
-  Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service
-  rbfrs.co.uk



Stay safe with Emollients



How to reduce the risks

- » **Keep away** from fire, flames and cigarettes when using all types of emollients.
- » **Do not** smoke in bed.
- » If this is not possible, **you must take steps to ensure you are safe** when you smoke or use naked flames. For example, by using a flameless lighter or e-cigarette.
- » Do not sit **too close** to any open fires, gas fires or halogen heaters if you or your clothes have been in contact with emollients.
- » Wash your clothing and bedding frequently at the **highest temperature recommended** by the fabric care instructions, to reduce the build-up of an emollient.

What are the risks of using Emollients?

Research from Anglia Ruskin University, De Montfort University and the NFCC's Emollient Group confirmed that both paraffin and non-paraffin emollients can **act as an accelerant** in the event of a fire when **absorbed into clothing** and exposed to naked flames or other heat sources.

Testing confirmed that the **flammability increases** each time the fabric is contaminated with emollient and the risk is greater when applied over large parts of the body. Repeated washing of clothing, bandages and bedding at any temperature **does not fully remove** the fire risk.

Anyone who smokes and has **reduced mobility** are those **most at risk** and Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service is urging them, their families and carers to be alert to the inherent fire risk and updated fire safety advice.

If you're concerned about your emollient products, please speak to a GP, family member, carer, a professional or Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service to arrange a Safe and Well Visit at safeandwell@rbfrs.co.uk

Health and Fire Chiefs Warning

More than 50 people have **died or been seriously injured** in the last decade after emollient cream dried on bed sheets or clothing and then set alight while people were smoking, health and fire chiefs have warned.

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) said that skin creams which have dried on fabric **can lead to fire deaths**.

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service has joined with the MHRA, National Fire Chiefs Council, other Fire and Rescue Services and health charities to **raise awareness** among people who use emollients.

Misting

Depending on the level of risk for each individual, consideration may want to be given to purchasing or providing a misting system.