NHS
Suffolk and
North East Essex

Position Statement for Medicines of Low Value

BATH AND SHOWER PREPARATIONS FOR DRY AND PRURITIC SKIN CONDITIONS

Summary

The Suffolk and North East Essex Integrated Care Board (SNEE ICB) does not support the prescribing of bath and shower preparations for dry and pruritic skin conditions, in line with NHS England's national guidance on medicines which should no longer be prescribed due to a lack of robust evidence of clinical effectiveness, or because there are significant safety concerns.[1]

All bath and shower preparations for dry and pruritic skin conditions are classed as "Double Red" i.e., no prescribing in primary or secondary care

There are no patient exceptionalities identified

Emollient bath and shower preparations are used in patients with atopic eczema/dermatitis and a variety of other dry skin conditions.

There is no evidence of clinical benefit for including pour in emollient bath additives in the standard management of eczema. A multicentre pragmatic parallel group RCT looking at emollient bath additives for the treatment of childhood eczema (BATHE) showed that there was no evidence of clinical benefit for including emollient bath additives in the standard management of childhood eczema.[2,3]

Soap avoidance and 'leave-on' emollient moisturisers should still be used for treating eczema and these emollients can still be used as soap substitutes. It is recognised that 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 apply to adults until good quality evidence emerges.[2]

DEPRESCRIBING ADVICE

- **Bath preparations should be reviewed, de-prescribed and substituted with a formulary leave-on emollient**
- Patients should be advised of the lack of robust evidence to support its ongoing use
- Consider asking patients to buy leave on emollients over the counter (OTC) where bath and shower preparations have been used infrequently
- Where the preparations have been started by dermatologists, patients should be advised that dermatologists are in support of the guidance and are no longer recommending the use of bath and shower preparations for new and existing patients
- Patients should be made aware that these cannot be prescribed by GP practices under any circumstances
- Patients should be counselled on the use of any leave on emollients as soap substitutes

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NEW PATIENTS

- **Do not prescribe bath or shower preparations under any circumstances**
- Patients should be advised of the lack of robust evidence to support its ongoing use and potential safety concerns e.g., slipping and risk of skin irritation
- Patients should be made aware that these cannot be prescribed by GP practices under any circumstances
- Consider using leave on emollients as soap substitutes
- Consider OTC recommendation for emollients if not using regularly
- Requests from secondary care must not be fulfilled and advice sought for alternative products where required

FURTHER SUPPORT

- National Patient Information Leaflets have been developed and can be supplied to patients to help support the deprescribing of these products (click here)
- Patients who wish to seek further clarification can be directed to Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) via:
    - E-mail: sneeicb.pals@nhs.net
    - Telephone: 0800 389 6819

Reference

1. NHS Specialist Pharmacy Services. Clinical Evidence for emollient bath and shower preparations. NHS England: Items which should not be routinely prescribed in primary care: Evidence reviews. [Online] 07 2019. [Cited: 27 09 2910.] https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/annex-b-sps-evidence-review-bath-emollients.pdf
2. Emollient bath additives for the treatment of childhood eczema (BATHE): multicentre pragmatic parallel group randomised controlled trial of clinical and cost effectiveness. The BMJ. 1332, s.l. : BMJ, 2018, Vol. 361
3. NHS England and NHS Clinical Commissioners. Items which should not routinely be prescribed in primary care: Guidance for CCGs. s.l. : NHS England, June 2019