

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.

