

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 or carer. Alternatively, book a Safe and Well Visit from Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service by calling **0800 587 6679** or visiting **rbfrs.co.uk/safeandwell**.

How to reduce the risks from emollients

- **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.

Misting

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

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.

Scan the QR Code to read more online:



What are emollients and where can you find them?

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

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
- Leave on products

What to do if there is a fire in your home

In the event of a fire:

Stay Calm:

- Follow your evacuation plan and get to a safe space.

Call 999:

- Ask for the fire and rescue service.
- Help us find you – Provide an accurate location of your home.
- Wait for firefighters to arrive in a safe location and guide them to the scene of the incident.

Do not tackle the fire by yourself.

Get out. Stay out. Call 999.

For more information on home fire safety, visit rbfrs.co.uk/yoursafety

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Stay safe with

Emollient Creams

