Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Fire hazard products

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Skin Creams: Alert

Clothing, bedding, dressings, and bandages with skin cream dried on them can catch fire easily, causing severe and fatal burns. Creams are important in managing different skin conditions. You should continue to use your skin products as directed by your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist. However, it is also important that you are aware of the potential danger and know how to keep safe when using these products.

Stay away from naked flames and heat sources when using these products.

For more information, visit gov.uk/mhra

Do you use a skin cream, ointment, lotion, gel, spray, bath oil, or soap substitute (sometimes called emollients)? They are used to manage dry skin conditions such as eczema, psoriasis, and ichthyosis. Some dressings and bandages may come with ointment already on them. Emollients can transfer from your skin onto clothing, bedding, and bandages. In the presence of an ignition source, fabric with emollient dried on it can catch fire much more quickly and burn hotter than clean fabric. This can cause severe burns and even death.

How to Use Emollients Safely

1. For advice and guidance on reducing your fire risk when using emollients, please contact your local fire and rescue service.
2. Please speak to your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist if you have any questions about the information in this leaflet.
3. Do not smoke, cook, or go near any naked flames or heat sources such as gas, halogen, electric bar, or open fires whilst wearing clothing or dressings that have been in contact with emollient-treated skin. If this is not possible, take steps to reduce the risk; e.g., use a safety lighter or e-cigarette, remove long-sleeved or loose clothing before cooking, put a thick uncontaminated shirt, overall, or apron over your clothes, and move your chair further away from the open fire or other heat source.
4. Change and wash your clothes frequently (preferably daily). Washing your clothes at the highest temperature recommended by the manufacturer might reduce the build-up of emollient on them but does not remove it completely, and the danger may remain.

5. Take care the cream doesn’t dry onto cushions, soft furnishings, and bedding. If it does, use uncontaminated throws/covers on your seating and wash your bedding frequently as above.
6. Tell your relatives or carers about your treatment and show them this leaflet. Those who care for you can help to keep you safe.
7. Tell your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist if you normally smoke. They will be able to offer you help and advice to stop smoking.



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