





Chapter 13 Skin

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[For cost information please go to the most recent cost comparison charts](#)

Key

	Red drug see GMMMG RAG list <i>Click on the symbols to access this list</i>
	Amber drug see GMMMG RAG list <i>Click on the symbols to access this list</i>
	Green drug see GMMMG RAG list <i>Click on the symbols to access this list</i>
U	If a medicine is unlicensed this should be highlighted in the template as follows Drug name U
	Not Recommended
OTC	Over the Counter
Order of Drug Choice	Where there is no preferred 1 st line agent provided, the drug choice appears in alphabetical order.

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Section	13.2 Emollient and barrier preparations	
	<p>If the patient's symptoms have not improved after using these preferred treatments then please refer to the BNF for other options. This is in preference to referring to a specialist centre.</p> <p>Patients who have been discharged or recommended a product from a specialist centre should be maintained on the same product when it is effective.</p> <p>Those people without a diagnosed dermatological condition requesting a general skin moisturiser may purchase these over the counter.</p>	
Subsection	13.2.1 Emollients	
Notes	<p>Once a suitable emollient has been determined for a patient then prescribe as 500g or 500ml.</p> <p>Section 13.2 (only) Emollients and barrier preparations are listed in cost order based on cost per 500g or 500ml pack size.</p> <p>(Source: Drug Tariff and MIMs Feb 2015).</p>	
Light emollients 1st choices	<p>QV Skin lotion</p> <p>E45[®] lotion or cream</p>	
Alternatives	<p>Cetraben lotion</p> <p>Diprobase lotion</p>	
Medium emollients 1st choices	<p>Ultrabase[®] cream</p> <p>Oilatum[®] cream</p> <p>Doublebase[®] gel</p>	
Alternatives	<p>Cetraben emollient[®] cream</p> <p>Diprobase[®] cream</p>	
Greasy emollients 1st choices	<p>Emulsifying ointment</p> <p>White soft paraffin ointment</p> <p>Fifty:50 ointment</p>	<p>MHRA DSU: Paraffin -based skin emollients on dressings and clothing: fire risk</p> <p>MHRA DSU: Paraffin-based treatments: risk of fire, Jan 2008</p>
Alternatives	<p>Hydromol[®] ointment (not cream)</p> <p>Zeroderm[®] ointment</p>	
Preparations containing urea 1st choice	imuDERM[®] cream	Preparations containing urea should only be used for severely dry, scaling skin.
Alternatives	<p>Balneum[®] cream</p> <p>Balneum plus[®] cream</p>	Preparations containing urea should only be used for severely dry, scaling skin.

Preparations with antimicrobials	Dermol 500[®] lotion Dermol[®] cream	MHRA device alert: All products containing chlorhexidine, Oct 2012 Preparations containing benzalkonium chloride may cause skin irritation with long term use.
Do Not Prescribe	Lanolin cream e.g. Lansinoh HPA [®]	Criterion 1 (see RAG list)
	Bio-Oil[®]	Criterion 1 (see RAG list)
Subsection	13.2.1.1 Emollient bath and shower preparations	
Grey drugs Items which are listed as Grey are deemed not suitable for routine prescribing but may be suitable for a defined patient population	Preparations with antimicrobials Dermol[®] 600 bath emollient Only for short-term use in patients with infected eczema.	G_n Criterion 1 (see RAG list) MHRA device alert: All products containing chlorhexidine, Oct 2012
Do Not Prescribe	Emollient bath additives without antimicrobials When used for the management of eczema in children. This recommendation does not apply to the use of standard emollients when used in the bath as a soap substitute	Criterion 1 (see RAG list)
Subsection	13.2.2 Barrier preparations	
	Zinc and Castor oil ointment Conotrane[®] cream Drapolene[®] cream	








Section	13.3 Topical local anaesthetics and antipruritics	
	<p>Crotamiton cream (Eurax®)</p> <p>Levomenthol (Menthol in aqueous cream 0.5%, 1%, 2%) (Dermacool®)</p>	

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Section	13.4 Topical corticosteroids	
MILD potency First Choice	Hydrocortisone 0.5% and 1% cream or ointment	
Alternative	Fluocinolone acetonide 0.0025% cream (Synalar 1 in 10 Dilution [®])	
MILD potency with antimicrobials	<p>Hydrocortisone 1% with clotrimazole 1% (Canesten HC[®] cream) with miconazole 2% (Daktacort[®] cream or ointment)</p> <p>Hydrocortisone 0.5% with nystatin (Timodine[®] cream, Nystaform-HC[®] cream or ointment)</p>	MHRA DSU (June 2016): Topical miconazole, including oral gel: reminder of potential for serious interactions with warfarin
MODERATE potency First Choice	Clobetasone butyrate 0.05% cream or ointment (Eumovate [®])	
Alternatives	<p>Alclometasone dipropionate 0.05% cream (Modrasone[®])</p> <p>Betamethasone valerate 0.025% cream or ointment (Betnovate RD[®])</p> <p>Fludroxycortide 4 microgram/cm² tape 7.5cm x 50cm or 7.5cm x 200cm (Haelan[®])</p>	Haelan [®] tape for chronic localised recalcitrant dermatoses (but not acute or weeping)
MODERATE potency with antimicrobials	Trimovate[®] cream 30g	
MODERATE potency with urea	Alphaderm[®] cream	
POTENT First Choice	<p>Betamethasone valerate 0.1% cream or ointment (Betnovate[®])</p> <p>Betamethasone valerate 0.1% scalp application (Betacap[®])</p>	

<p>Alternatives</p>	<p>Fluocinolone acetonide 0.025% cream, gel or ointment (Synalar[®])</p> <p>Hydrocortisone butyrate 0.1% cream or ointment (Locoid[®])</p> <p>Mometasone furoate 0.1% cream or ointment (Elocon[®])</p>	
<p>POTENT with antimicrobials</p>	<p>Betamethasone valerate 0.1% with fusidic acid (Fucibet[®] cream)</p> <p>Fluocinolone acetonide 0.025% with clioquinol 3% (Synalar C[®] cream or ointment)</p> <p>with neomycin sulphate 0.5% (Synalar N[®] cream or ointment)</p>	
<p>POTENT with salicylic acid</p>	<p>Diprosalic[®] ointment or scalp application</p>	
<p>VERY POTENT</p>	<p>Clobetasol propionate 0.05% cream, ointment or scalp application (Dermovate[®])</p> <p>Clobetasol propionate 0.05% Shampoo (Etrivex[®])</p> <p>Diflucortolone valerate 0.3% oily cream or ointment (Nerisone Forte[®])</p>	
<p>Additional guidance to be considered:</p> <p>MHRA DSU (Sept 2007) Corticosteroids: early psychiatric side-effects</p>		

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Section	13.5 Preparations for eczema and psoriasis	
Subsection	13.5.1 Preparations for eczema	
Notes	See section 13.2.1 emollients and 13.4 topical corticosteroids. Also see section 13.5.3 Drugs affecting the immune response and NICE (2004) Tacrolimus and pimecrolimus for atopic eczema. (TA82)	
Oral Retinoid	Alitretinoin capsules: 10mg, 30mg	R Alitretinoin should be prescribed only by a consultant. NICE TA177: Alitretinoin for the treatment of severe chronic hand eczema. MHRA DSU: Oral retinoids: pregnancy prevention, June 2013
Do Not Prescribe	Silk garments Including Dermasilk [®] , Dreamskin [®] , Skinnies Silk [®]	Criterion 1 (see RAG list)
Subsection	13.5.2 Preparations for psoriasis See section 13.2.1 emollients. See section 13.9 for shampoos.	
Vitamin D and analogues	Calcipotriol 50 micrograms/g ointment Calcipotriol 50micrograms/ml scalp solution Calcitriol 3 micrograms/g ointment (Silkis [®])	NICE CG153: Psoriasis. Note Vitamin D and its analogues are first line for the long term treatment of plaque psoriasis.
Vitamin D with corticosteroid	Dovobet[®] gel 60g, 120g	
Tazarotene	Tazarotene 0.05%, 0.1% gel (Zorac [®])	
Tars	Exorex[®] lotion Psoriderm[®] cream	
Bath preparations	Polytar Emollient[®] bath additive Psoriderm[®] bath emulsion	
Scalp preparations	Psoriderm[®] scalp lotion Sebco[®] scalp ointment	

<p>Tars Non-proprietary preparations</p>	<p>Non-proprietary products (specials) are high cost (up to £1,000 per 500g).</p> <p>Patients may find proprietary preparations more acceptable.</p> <p>Non-proprietary products (specials) should only be initiated following specialist advice.</p>	<p>Specials recommended by the British Association of Dermatologists</p>
<p>Dithranol</p>	<p>Dithrocream[®] 0.1% , 0.25%, 0.5%, 1%, 2% cream</p> <p>Micanol[®] 1%, 3% cream</p> <p>Dithranol (unlicensed preparations) U</p>	<p>G_n following specialist recommendation</p> <p>G_n following specialist recommendation</p> <p>R</p>
<p>Oral retinoids for psoriasis</p>	<p>Acitretin 10mg, 25mg capsules</p>	<p>R</p> <p>MHRA DSU: Oral retinoids: pregnancy prevention, June 2013</p>
<p>Dimethyl fumarate</p>	<p>Dimethyl fumarate (Skilarence[®]) 30mg, 120mg tablets</p>	<p>R</p> <p>NICE TA475: Dimethyl fumarate for treating moderate to severe plaque psoriasis</p>
<p>Subsection</p>	<p>13.5.3 Drugs Affecting the Immune Response</p>	
<p>Severe psoriasis and severe eczema</p>	<p>Apremilast[▼] (Otezla[®])10, 20, 30mg tablets</p> <p>Ciclosporin 10mg, 25mg, 50mg, 100mg capsules</p> <p>Ciclosporin 100mg/ml oral solution</p>	<p>R</p> <p>MHRA DSU (2017): risk of suicidal thoughts and behaviour</p> <p>NICE TA419: Apremilast for treating moderate to severe plaque psoriasis</p> <p>TA433: Apremilast for treating active psoriatic arthritis</p> <p>A MUST be prescribed by BRAND</p> <p>Patients should be stabilised on a particular brand of oral ciclosporin.</p>
<p>Severe Psoriasis</p>	<p>Methotrexate 2.5mg tablets</p>	<p>A</p> <p>NPSA Alert (2006): Improving compliance with oral methotrexate</p>

<p>Atopic mild to moderate eczema</p>	<p>Pimecrolimus 1% cream</p> <p>Tacrolimus 0.03%, 0.1% ointment</p>	<p> following specialist recommendation</p> <p>NICE TA82: Tacrolimus and pimecrolimus for atopic eczema.</p> <p> following specialist recommendation</p> <p>See also NICE:CG153 Psoriasis</p> <p>MHRA DSU: Tacrolimus ointment: possible risk of malignancies, June 2012</p>
<p>Severe refractory eczema</p>	<p>Azathioprine 50mg tablets U</p> <p>Mycophenolate mofetil 250mg capsules, 500mg tablets U</p>	<p></p> <p></p> <p>MHRA DSU: Mycophenolate mofetil, mycophenolic acid: new pregnancy-prevention advice for women and men 2015</p> <p>MHRA DSU: Mycophenolate mofetil: pure red cell aplasia, July 2009</p> <p>MHRA DSU: Mycophenolate mofetil: risk of hypogammaglobulinaemia and risk of bronchiectasis, Jan 2015</p>
<p>Cytokine modulators</p>	<p>Adalimumab</p> <p>Brodalumab</p> <p>Dupilumab</p>	<p></p> <p>NICE TA146: Adalimumab for the treatment of adults with psoriasis.</p> <p>NICE TA392: Adalimumab for treating moderate to severe hidradenitis suppurativa</p> <p></p> <p>NICE TA511: Brodalumab for treating moderate to severe plaque psoriasis</p> <p></p> <p>NICE TA534: Dupilumab for treating moderate to severe atopic dermatitis</p>

	Etanercept	<p>R</p> <p>NICE TA103: Etanercept and efalizumab for the treatment of adults with psoriasis.</p>
	Guselkumab	<p>R</p> <p>NICE TA521: Guselkumab for treating moderate to severe plaque psoriasis</p>
	Infliximab	<p>R</p> <p>NICE TA134: Infliximab for the treatment of adults with psoriasis.</p>
	Ixekizumab	<p>R</p> <p>NICE TA442: Ixekizumab for treating moderate to severe plaque psoriasis</p>
	Secukinumab	<p>R</p> <p>N.B. Treatment with secukinumab should be stopped after 12 weeks if the psoriasis does not improve enough according to standard measures</p> <p>NICE TA350: Secukinumab for treating moderate to severe plaque psoriasis</p> <p>NICE TA445: Certolizumab pegol and secukinumab for treating active psoriatic arthritis after inadequate response to DMARDs</p>
	Ustekinumab	<p>R</p> <p>NICE TA180: Ustekinumab for the treatment of adults with moderate to severe psoriasis.</p> <p>NICE TA340: Ustekinumab for treating active psoriatic arthritis</p> <p>MHRA DSU: Ustekinumab: risk of exfoliative dermatitis, Jan 2015</p>

Additional guidance to be considered:

[GMMMG \(2012, reviewed 2015\): The sequential use of biological agents in the treatment of Chronic Plaque Psoriasis, for those patients fulfilling NICE criteria for a biologic](#)

[NICE CG153: The assessment and management of Psoriasis.](#)

[NICE TA199: Etanercept, infliximab and adalimumab for the treatment of psoriatic arthritis](#)

[MHRA DSU: Tumour necrosis factor alpha inhibitors, April 2014](#)

BNF chapter	13 Skin	
Section	13.6 Acne and rosacea	
Subsection	13.6.1 Topical preparations for acne	NICE CKS (2014): Acne vulgaris See link for guidance on the management of mild, moderate and severe acne
Benzoyl peroxide	Benzoyl peroxide 5% gel, aquagel, cream	
with antimicrobials	Benzoyl peroxide 10%, potassium hydroxyquinoline sulphate 0.5% cream (Quinoderm®) Benzoyl peroxide 5%, clindamycin 1% gel (Duac® Once Daily)	
Azelaic acid	Azelaic acid 20% cream (Skinoren®)	Acne vulgaris only
Topical antibacterials for acne	Clindamycin 1% topical solution (Dalacin T®) Erythromycin 40mg with zinc acetate 12mg/mL topical solution (Zineryt®)	Use non-antibiotic antimicrobials (such as benzoyl peroxide or azelaic acid) to avoid development of resistance to erythromycin and clindamycin
Topical retinoids and related preparations for acne	Adapalene 0.1% cream or gel (Differin®)	Topical retinoids are contraindicated in pregnancy
with benzoyl peroxide	Adapalene 0.1%, benzoyl peroxide 2.5% gel (Epiduo®)	
with antimicrobials	Tretinoin 0.025%, clindamycin 1% gel (Treclin®)	Topical retinoids are contraindicated in pregnancy
Subsection	13.6.2 Oral preparations for acne and rosacea	
	See BNF for guidance on course lengths and refer to local antibacterial guidelines. Topical antibiotics and oral antibiotics should ideally not be combined together, as this combination is unlikely to confer additional benefit and may encourage the development of bacterial resistance.	
Oral antibacterials for rosacea First Choice	Oxytetracycline 250mg tablets Erythromycin 250mg tablets	

Alternatives	Doxycycline 100mg capsules	
Oral antibacterials for acne First Choice	Oxytetracycline 250mg tablets	
Alternatives	Lymecycline 408mg capsules Doxycycline 100mg capsules Erythromycin 250mg tablets	
Hormone treatment for acne	Co-cyprindiol tablets 2mg /35 microgram	MHRA DSU: Co-cyprindiol: balance of benefits and risks remains positive, Jun 2013
Oral retinoid for acne	Isotretinoin 5mg, 10mg, 20mg, 40mg capsules	<p>R</p> <p>MHRA DSU: Isotretinoin for severe acne: who should prescribe it, Aug 2007</p> <p>MHRA DSU: Isotretinoin: risk of serious skin reactions, Sept 2010</p> <p>MHRA DSU: Oral retinoids: pregnancy prevention, June 2013</p> <p>MHRA DSU: Isotretinoin: reminder of possible risk of psychiatric disorders, Dec 2014</p> <p>MHRA DSU: Isotretinoin (Roaccutane): rare reports of erectile dysfunction and decreased libido, Oct 2017</p>
Subsection	13.6.3 Topical preparations for rosacea	
First choice	Metronidazole 0.75% cream or gel (Rozex®) Azelaic acid 15% gel (Finacea®)	Prescribe by brand due to strength and cost variations
Alternatives	Brimonidine 3 mg/g gel (Mirvaso®)	<p>NTS recommendation: Brimonidine</p> <p>Limit to patients with severe erythema when all other formulary options have failed</p> <p>MHRA DSU: Brimonidine gel (Mirvaso): risk of exacerbation of rosacea</p> <p>MHRA DSU: Brimonidine gel (Mirvaso): risk of systemic cardiovascular effects; not to be</p>

		applied to damaged skin
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Section	13.7 Preparations for warts and calluses	
First Choice	Salicylic acid 16.7% lactic acid 16.7% paint: (Salactol [®] 10ml), (Duofilm [®] 15ml)	
Alternatives	Salicylic acid 11%, lactic acid 4% gel (Cuplex [®]) Salicylic acid 26% cutaneous solution (Occlusal [®])	
Anogenital warts	Imiquimod 5% cream 12-sachet pack (Aldara [®]) Podophyllotoxin 0.5% solution (Condyline [®]) Podophyllotoxin 0.15% cream (Warticon [®])	G_n following specialist initiation
Do Not Prescribe	Potassium hydroxide 5% topical solution (Molludab [®])	<u>Criterion 1 (see RAG list)</u>

BNF chapter	13 Skin	
Section	13.8 Sunscreens and Camouflagers	
Subsection	13.8.1 Sunscreen preparations	
	Sunscreens are only prescribable for ACBS approved conditions i.e. abnormal cutaneous photosensitivity resulting from genetic disorders or photodermatoses including vitiligo and those resulting from radiotherapy.	
	Sunsense® Ultra lotion UVB-SPF 50+ 500ml Uvistat® cream UVB-SPF 50	Preparations with an SPF less than 30 should not be prescribed.
Photodamage	Diclofenac sodium 3% gel (Solaraze®) Fluorouracil 5% cream (Efudix®) Ingenol mebutate (Picato®▼) 150mcg/g gel 500mcg/g gel	NTS recommendation: Newer products for topical treatment of actinic keratosis (AK) which includes the Primary Care Dermatology Society AK Treatment Pathway (April 2014) Ingenol mebutate should only be used for the treatment of grade 1 or grade 2 lesions of small size (up to 25cm ²)
with salicylic acid	Fluorouracil 0.5%, salicylic acid 10% solution (Actikerall®)	
Subsection	13.8.2 Camouflagers	
	Camouflagers are only prescribable for ACBS approved conditions i.e. postoperative scars and other deformities and as an adjunctive therapy in the relief of emotional disturbances due to disfiguring skin disease, such as vitiligo.	
	Dermacolor® Camouflage crème (100 shades) Fixing powder (7 shades) Covermark® Classic foundation (10 shades) Finishing powder	

BNF chapter	13 Skin	
Section	13.9 Shampoos and other preparations for scalp and hair conditions	
Shampoos	Ketoconazole 2% shampoo Selenium sulphide 2.5% shampoo (Selsun [®])	
Coal tar shampoos	Alphosyl 2 in 1[®] shampoo Polytar[®] liquid Polytar Plus[®] liquid T/Gel[®] Therapeutic shampoo	
Coal tar and salicylic acid shampoos	Capasal[®] shampoo	
Hirsutism First choice	Co-cyprindiol tablets: 2mg /35 microgram	MHRA DSU: Co-cyprindiol: balance of benefits and risks remains positive, Jun 2013
Alternative	Eflornithine 11.5% cream (Vaniqa [®])	NTS recommendation: Eflornithine 11.5% cream
Androgenetic alopecia	Not prescribable on the NHS	

BNF Chapter	13 Skin	
Section	13.10 Anti-infective skin preparations	
Subsection	13.10.1 Antibacterial preparations	
Subsection	13.10.1.1 Antibacterial preparations only used topically	
	Mupirocin 2% cream or ointment	Should only be used to treat methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA)
	Silver sulfadiazine 1% cream (Flamazine®)	
	Polymyxin B 10,000units bacitracin zinc 500units/g ointment (Polyfax®)	
Subsection	13.10.1.2 Antibacterial preparations also used systemically	
	Fusidic acid 2% cream or ointment (Fucidin®)	
	Metronidazole 0.75% gel - Anabact®30g	For malodorous fungating tumours and malodorous gravitational and decubitus ulcers
Subsection	13.10.2 Antifungal preparations	
	Clotrimazole 1% cream Miconazole 2% cream Terbinafine 1% cream	MHRA DSU (June 2016): Topical miconazole, including oral gel: reminder of potential for serious interactions with warfarin
For oral antifungal options such as terbinafine see GMMMG chapter 5 .		
Subsection	13.10.3 Antiviral preparations	
First choice	Aciclovir 5% cream	
Do Not Prescribe	Idoxuridine in dimethyl sulfoxide Topical solution (Herpid®)	Criterion 1 (see RAG list)
Also see oral antiviral options in GMMMG chapter 5 .		
Subsection	13.10.4 Parasiticial preparations	

<p>Head lice</p>	<p>Dimeticone 4% lotion (Hedrin®)</p> <p>Malathion 0.5% aqueous liquid (Derbac-M®)</p>	<p>NICE CKS (2015): Head lice</p>
<p>Wet combing methods: Head lice can be mechanically removed by combing wet hair meticulously with a plastic detection comb.</p>		
<p>Scabies and crab lice</p>	<p>Permethrin 5% cream</p> <p>Malathion 0.5% aqueous liquid (Derbac-M®)</p>	<p>NICE CKS (2011): Scabies</p> <p>NICE CKS (2011): Pubic lice</p>
<p>Subsection</p>	<p>13.10.5 Preparations for minor cuts and abrasions</p>	
	<p>Cetrimide 0.5% cream BP</p>	

BNF chapter	13 Skin	
Section	13.11 Skin cleansers, antiseptics, and desloughing agents	
Subsection	13.11.1 Alcohols and saline	
Subsection	13.11.2 Chlorhexidine salts	
	Chlorhexidine gluconate 4% solution (Hibiscrub®)	MHRA device alert: All products containing chlorhexidine, Oct 2012
Subsection	13.11.3 Cationic surfactants and soaps	
Subsection	13.11.4 Iodine	
	Povidone-iodine 2.5% dry powder spray (Betadine®) Povidone-iodine 1.14% dry powder spray (Savlon® Dry)	
Subsection	13.11.5 Phenolics	
Subsection	13.11.6 Oxidisers and dyes	
	Potassium permanganate 400mg solution tablets (Permitabs®) Hydrogen peroxide 1% cream (Crystacide®)	NHS Patient safety Alert (2014): Risk of death or serious harm from accidental ingestion of potassium permanganate

Section	13.12 Antiperspirants	
	<p>Aluminium chloride hexahydrate 20% solution for application (Anhydrol forte[®], 60mL) (Driclor[®], 75mL)</p>	
	<p>Botulinum toxin Type A (Botox[®] - licensed for severe hyperhidrosis of the axillae).</p>	<p>R GM EUR policy (2014) Hyperhidrosis</p>