



Medicines & Healthcare products  
Regulatory Agency



**NFCC**  
National Fire  
Chiefs Council



**Using your  
emollients  
safely**

**#KnowTheFireRisk**

**Did you know?** Clothing with emollients  
dried-on can catch fire easily



## What is an emollient?

Emollients are used to treat people of all ages for dry, itchy or scaly skin conditions such as eczema and psoriasis. Emollients are also used to prevent or treat pressure sores.



Emollients are available to buy over the counter or by prescription as lotions, sprays, creams, ointments, bath oils and soap substitutes. They may be water-based, contain paraffin or natural oils.

## Why you should be careful

Emollients are not flammable in themselves. However, regular use of these products, especially when applying to large areas of your body, can lead to them drying onto your clothing, bedding and bandages/dressings leaving a flammable residue. If you then introduce an ignition or heat source such as:

**Accidentally dropping a lit cigarette, match or lighter**



**Sitting too close to a gas, halogen, or open fire**



**Catching clothing on a hob when cooking**



... you can cause a fire to develop. The fire will burn very intensely, spread within seconds and could lead to serious injury or death.

## Home fire safety check

Anyone who uses emollients should be aware of the risk. We advise you to complete a free online home fire safety check for advice and, if needed, a visit from your fire service.

Please visit [www.OHFSC.co.uk](http://www.OHFSC.co.uk) or scan the QR code.



## What you should do to make sure you're safe:

Ask your healthcare provider for support to help you quit smoking or for advice on alternative stop smoking aids.

Ensure your safety by not smoking and not allowing others to smoke near you if there is any chance your clothing, dressings or bedding could be contaminated with emollient.

Never smoke in bed.

Make sure your home has working smoke alarms and test them regularly.

Cook safely by using microwaves, air fryers, or induction hobs to avoid fire risks if clothing or dressings are contaminated with emollients and avoid using gas or electric hobs.

Keep a safe distance from open, gas or electric bar fires and halogen heaters when staying warm.

Do not dry clothes on or in front of fires or heaters.

Prevent emollient residue build-up on soft furnishings by using throws to cover them and wash them regularly at the highest temperature the manufacturer advises to reduce the risk.

Keep candles away from your clothing, including when lighting them.

Tell your healthcare professional or carer about any changes in your condition that might affect your fire safety, such as new medications causing drowsiness, significant mobility decline, problems with memory or recall.

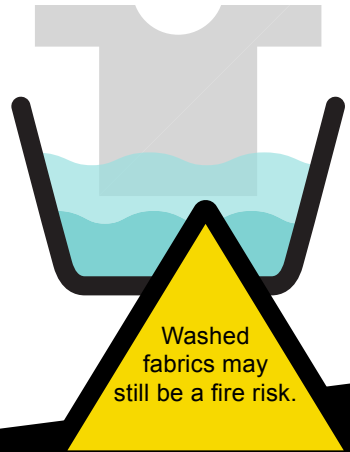
Do read the warnings on your product packaging and share them, along with the advice in this leaflet, with your family and carers so that they can help keep you safe.

## Wash fabrics regularly

Wash fabrics that have dried-on emollient regularly at the highest temperature recommended by the fabric care instructions.

This will reduce some of the contamination but may not remove it completely.

If using a tumble dryer use a cooler temperature setting and ensure it runs through the cool-down cycle prior to folding. This will allow heat to dissipate.



## What to do if your clothes catch fire

If you can:

