

Antiseptic Baths (Bleach Bath) for the treatment of eczema

(to use after discussion with your doctor or eczema team)

What are Antiseptic Baths?

Antiseptic baths contain *very* diluted Bleach (0.005% sodium hypochlorite (NaOCL)), a household chemical commonly used as a disinfectant. **You must never use undiluted bleach directly on skin.** Studies have shown that bleach at this low concentration is not harmful to skin, and that it may be effective as a disinfectant against many types of bacteria on the skin, for example *Staph. aureus* (including MRSA), which can exacerbate certain skin conditions such as eczema.

Milton® Sterilising Fluid (MSF) is a bleach solution that contains 2% NaOCL. It is recommended for use in antiseptic baths as it does not contain additional additives such as perfumes. This is why antiseptic baths are often called Milton baths.

Who should use antiseptic baths?

Antiseptic baths may be beneficial for people with skin infections. People who have eczema often have *Staph. aureus* on the skin all the time. This can lead to recurrent skin infections, especially if the eczema is severe. The health care professional looking after your child's eczema will advise you if your child might benefit from a short course of antiseptic baths.

Are there any side effects?

When used according to instructions, most people tolerate antiseptic baths well. Some may experience mild skin irritation. If this happens, rinse off thoroughly with fresh water (do not use water from the bleach bath to rinse) and apply your usual topical treatments or emollient. If you experience more severe side effects, such as very dry skin or nasal irritation, stop using bleach baths.

Written by Professor Hywel Williams, Dr Li Lin Hong, Dr Jane Ravenscroft, Nurse Consultant Sandra Lawton and parents on behalf of the Nottingham Support Group for Carers of Children with Eczema

Website – www.nottinghameczema.org.uk

email – enquiry@nottinghameczema.org.uk

© 2017 All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form or by any means without prior permission in writing from Paediatric Team, Queen's Medical Centre, Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust, Nottingham, NG7 2UH

Page 1 Ref: 36ABTH0717 July 2017

How do I prepare an antiseptic bath?

The bath should be prepared to contain approximately 2ml of Milton Sterilising fluid (MSF) per 1litre of water

One capful of Milton is 30mls.

The following instructions apply for an average bath filled $\frac{1}{4}$ full (approximately 30 litres of water).

1. Put two capfuls (60 ml) of Milton sterilising fluid into an empty bathtub.
2. Add lukewarm water to $\frac{1}{4}$ filled bath. Be certain that the bleach is mixed thoroughly with the water.
3. Let your child soak in the bath water for about 10 minutes.
4. If you notice that dryness and irritation occur after the soaking stage, thoroughly rinse the skin with lukewarm water at the end of the bleach bath.
5. As soon as the bath is over, pat skin dry. Do not rub as this is the same as scratching.
6. Then apply your emollient as normal.

The amount of Milton 2% can be adjusted as follows depending on the type of bath and how much you fill it:

- Four capfuls (120 ml) Milton in $\frac{1}{2}$ filled bath
- Half a capful Milton (15ml) in $\frac{1}{2}$ filled baby bath (7.5 litres)

Repeat antiseptic baths 2 to 3 times a week or as prescribed by the physician.

Are there any precautions I should know about?

- **Never use undiluted bleach directly on skin**
- **Keep bleach bottle out of reach of children.**
- Antiseptic baths may sting if there are lots of breaks and open areas in the skin.
- Avoid any direct contact of bleach with eyes. If this happens, rinse with lots of fresh water. Seek medical advice if eye discomfort or problems with eyesight occur.
- Do not swallow bleach. Seek medical attention immediately if any of the liquid has been swallowed.
- Do not use antiseptic baths in those with a known contact allergy to chlorine.
- Direct contact of bleach solution may whiten clothing/towels.

Written by Professor Hywel Williams, Dr Li Lin Hong, Dr Jane Ravenscroft, Nurse Consultant Sandra Lawton and parents on behalf of the Nottingham Support Group for Carers of Children with Eczema

Website – www.nottinghameczema.org.uk

email – enquiry@nottinghameczema.org.uk

© 2017 All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form or by any means without prior permission in writing from Paediatric Team, Queen's Medical Centre, Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust, Nottingham, NG7 2UH

Page 2. Ref: 36ABTH0717 July 2017