



## Medicaid Coverage of OTC Items

Nebraska Medicaid reimburses pharmacies for many over the counter (OTC) medications. Federal regulations identify OTCs as an optional category for coverage. Optional categories are not required to be covered under a state Medicaid program and a state may select which products to cover as they deem necessary. Examples of OTC products which are covered by Nebraska Medicaid include: vitamin supplements, analgesics/antipyretics, antacids, stool softeners, antihistamines, and emollients.

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## Emollient Use in the Treatment of Atopic Dermatitis

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*Atopic dermatitis* (AD), the most common type of *atopic eczema*, is a chronic inflammatory pruritic skin disease occurring most frequently in children and follows a relapsing course throughout adulthood in 25 percent of patients. Approximately 10-15 percent of infants aged 2-6 months are affected with AD. This condition is often associated with elevated serum IgE levels and a personal or family history of type I allergies, asthma or allergic rhinitis. AD is commonly characterized by intense itching, and inflamed, swollen, dry scaling, flaking skin. Although it can emerge almost anywhere on the body, children generally present with dermatitis of the scalp, face, neck, hands or folds of the elbows, wrists and knees.

The most important and fundamental step in the treatment of AD is rehydration of the skin. Adequate rehydration preserves the stratum corneum barrier and minimizes the direct ef-

Nebraska Medicaid Coverage for Emollients	
Covered Generic Drug Name	Corresponding Brand Name
Petrolatum Base Ointment	Aquaphor®
Dr. Smith's Diaper Ointment	Aquaphor®
Dermaphor Ointment	Aquaphor®
Ameriphor Moist Ointment	Aquaphor®
Moisturin Moist Dry Skin Cream	Eucerin®
Nouriva Repair Cream	Eucerin®
Dry Skin Cream	Eucerin®
Moisturin Cream	Eucerin®
Dry Skin Treatment Cream	Eucerin®
Moisturizing Cream	Eucerin®
Carrington Moist Barrier Cream	Eucerin®
Dermacerin Cream	Eucerin®
Lubrisoft Lotion	Lubriderm®
Dermalube Lotion	Lubriderm®
SM Dry Skin Therapy Lotion	Lubriderm®
Lubricating Skin Lotion	Lubriderm®

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fects of allergens and irritants. Treatment of AD should include lukewarm baths lasting 20-30 minutes, lightly patting the skin with a towel, followed by the immediate application of an emollient over the entire damp skin surface. Emollients are some of the most commonly prescribed topical agents and are the standard of care for many different types of dermatoses such as atopic dermatitis, eczema, psoriasis, diaper rash and much more. The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) clinical guidelines on atopic eczema in children state that they believe emollients are the most important treatment because they restore the defective skin barrier, thereby keeping moisture in and irritants out. Also, proper adherence to an emollient regimen has the potential to reduce the need for topical steroids, thus minimizing the need for a more expensive, and potentially dangerous treatment regimen.

Frequently recommended emollients are hydrophobic and ointment-based, such as Aquaphor®. Occasionally, parents will find the ointment-based emollients too greasy for daily use; therefore, a cream-based alternative such as Eucerin® may be offered. The cream-based emollients have weaker occlusive properties compared to ointments, thus should be used only if the ointment-based agents are not well tolerated.

According to the American Academy of Dermatology, clinical trials were reviewed and each of the trials demonstrated enhanced therapeutic response to emollient therapy. One retrospective study (Ainley-Walker et al. 1998) reported that 7 of 21 hospitalized patients demonstrated

similar improvement with emollient therapy only, and that for 2 patients, emollient therapy was superior to a topical corticosteroid. Another randomized controlled trial (Hanifin et al. 1998) demonstrated that the use of a combined emollient cream with a low-potency topical corticosteroid resulted in a significantly greater reduction in the severity of AD versus a topical steroid alone in both children and adults.

Nebraska Medicaid *only* reimburses pharmacies for **rebateable emollient products** prescribed for children. Some products such as Aquaphor®, Eucerin® and Lubriderm® are not covered, as the manufacturers do not participate in the rebate program. The table illustrates the emollient products coverable under Nebraska Medicaid for patients less than 18 years of age.

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A complete list of covered medications can be found at First Health Services Corporation's website for Nebraska Medicaid providers: <https://nebraska.fhsc.com/>. OTC medications are coverable only if the manufacturer or labeler participates in the federal rebate program and the patient has a valid prescription.

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