

Safety concerns

- **Do not** use undiluted bleach on the skin. If this occurs, rinse off immediately with lots of tap water.
- **Do not** get diluted bleach water in the eyes
- **Do not** swallow bleach water.
- Keep out of reach of children.
- **Do not** add bleach to a very hot bath, as this will produce fumes.
- Bleach may make the bath slippery so be careful.
- Bleach will cause bleaching of clothing and towels, so avoid contact with your favourite clothes and use white towels if possible.

Side effects

Most patients tolerate Milton Sterilising Fluid and bleach baths well, although sometimes you may experience a mild discomfort on the skin. If this happens, empty the bath and immediately rinse off with warm water before applying your usual moisturisers and creams.

If you are having problems regularly, stop using the Milton Sterilising Fluid baths and speak to your dermatology nurse or doctor.

Further information and help

For further information online about Bleach Baths please visit: <http://www.dermnetnz.org/topics/bleach-baths-in-patients-with-skin-infections/>

For further information contact:

Sarah Mitchell, Dermatology Liaison Nurse, Outpatients Department, Western Isles Hospital
Tel: 01851 708252. E-mail: sarah.mitchell15@wi.nhs.scot

If you experience any serious symptoms out of hours please contact: NHS24 telephone number: 111

If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.

We are listening - how did we do?

We welcome your feedback, as it helps us evaluate the services we provide. If you would like to tell us about your experience:

- speak to a member of staff
- visit our website www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/feedback or share your story at - www.careopinion.org.uk or tel. 0800 122 3135
- tel. 01851 704704 (ext 2236 Monday-Friday between 10am-4pm).



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Disclaimer

The content of this leaflet is intended to augment, not replace, information provided by your clinician. It is not intended nor implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice. Reading this information does not create or replace a doctor-patient relationship or consultation. If required, please contact your doctor or other health care provider to assist you to interpret any of this information, or in applying the information to your individual needs.

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Bòrd SSN nan Eilean Siar
NHS Western Isles

Bleach Baths

A treatment for infected skin and eczema



Patient information leaflet

Using Milton Sterilising Fluid or Bleach Baths

This leaflet aims to answer your questions about using Milton Sterilising Fluid or bleach baths to treat your skin.

Bleach baths are recommended for patients who are prone to frequent skin infections. This effectively turns the bathwater into a cleansing swimming pool. Patients with eczema are particularly at risk of infection as affected areas of their skin allows germs plenty of places to hide.

Skin Infections

Staphylococcal skin and soft tissue infections are more common in people with eczema and can be serious. Despite treatment, more than 20% of patients with skin and soft tissue infections have a recurrence within three months. Infections include infected eczema, boils, impetigo and folliculitis.

How can infection risk be reduced?

- Bleach baths.
- Chlorhexidine solution as a bath or shower antiseptic cleanser.
- General hygiene and wound care.
- Good attention to general skin care and treatment of underlying skin condition.

What is a bleach bath?

Bleach baths are made by diluting Milton Sterilising Fluid or bleach in plenty of water in the bath. The concentration of chlorine is similar to that of a swimming pool and has antimicrobial action.

Why use a bleach bath?

Along with other methods, bleach baths reduce the number of recurring skin infections.

Bleach baths are effective against bacteria, viruses and fungi. No resistance to Milton Sterilising Fluid has been reported, however the beneficial effect is only temporary.

Milton Sterilising Fluid or Bleach?

Milton Sterilising Fluid is a form of bleach and contains sodium hypochlorite 2%. It is recommended over other bleach formulations as it does not contain colouring agents or perfumes, so it is less likely to cause stinging or irritation.

Another advantage is that it comes as a standard strength. Milton Sterilising Fluid can be bought from most local pharmacies and supermarkets and is also available online.

You can substitute for other brands, but they should be free of perfumes, colours and consist of 2% hypochlorite.

How to use Milton Sterilising Fluid in the bath

Milton Sterilising Fluid baths are usually recommended for use two to three times a week. It is recommended that you leave two days between baths to avoid causing irritation.

The following instructions are for a standard full-size bath:

- **Fill the bath** with warm water to around 10cm depth. This is usually around 60 litres. You can use a measuring jug or bucket the first time to help work out how much this looks like.
- **Add 125ml or 1/2 a cup of Milton Sterilising Fluid** to the water and completely mix it in (around 2ml per litre of bathwater).
- **Soak in the bath** water up to your neck for **ten minutes**. For smaller children, you can use a sponge or flannel to soak any dry and affected areas that are out of the water.
- Do not splash water onto the face as it will irritate the eyes.
- **Rinse well** with fresh warm water, for example **in the shower**.
- **Pat the skin dry** with a towel, do not rub.
- Immediately **apply any prescribed moisturisers and creams**.
- If you have been advised by your doctor or nurse to use Milton Sterilising Fluid baths as a hand or foot soak you can follow the instructions above but instead add 15mls of Milton Sterilising Fluid to a washing-up bowl or bucket, and then add 7 ½ litres of water before soaking hands or feet for 10 minutes.