

baby lotion

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Baby Lotion

A light moisturiser for infant skin. It is a straightforward product with one genuinely interesting piece of evidence behind it: **routine emollient use in infancy may matter for more than dry skin.**

Why infant skin needs it

- **A thinner stratum corneum** at birth, maturing over the first year.
- **Higher transepidermal water loss** in the first weeks, so infant skin dries faster.
- **A developing acid mantle and barrier lipid profile.**
- **Much higher surface area relative to body mass**, which is why what goes on infant skin is a proportionally larger exposure than the same product on an adult.

The barrier and allergy question

An emollient does the ordinary job — humectants hold water, occlusives slow its loss, and emollients smooth the surface. What made the category scientifically interesting was the **atopic march hypothesis**: that a defective skin barrier in infancy allows allergen sensitisation through the skin, and that supporting the

barrier early might reduce eczema and food allergy.

Early pilot studies were encouraging. **Larger randomised trials — BEEP and PreventADALL among them — did not find that routine daily emollient use in unselected infants prevented eczema**, and one raised a question about skin infections.

The honest summary: **emollients treat dry skin and are the foundation of eczema management once it exists**; they are **not established as a preventive** for eczema or allergy in babies without it. That is a useful correction to a claim that circulated widely.

For a baby who **has** eczema, emollients remain the central treatment, applied generously and frequently, and that is not in doubt.

What to look for

Want	Avoid
Fragrance-free	Fragrance — the leading avoidable irritant
Short ingredient lists	Essential oils on infant skin
Glycerin, petrolatum, dimethicone, ceramides, oat	Formaldehyde-releasers, isothiazolinones
Tubes and pumps	Tubs dipped into with fingers

"Hypoallergenic" means nothing. It has no federal standard, no obligation to substantiate, and FDA states it means whatever the company wants it to mean. The 1975 rule requiring comparative testing was struck down in 1977 and never replaced.

Applying it

Onto damp skin within three minutes of a bath, which is when it does most good. Warm it in the hands first. Gently — infant massage is pleasant for both parties and there is reasonable evidence it helps settle babies, though the claims made for it beyond that are overstated.

Not on broken, weeping or infected skin without advice, and any rash that is spreading, blistering or accompanied by fever needs a clinician rather than a lotion.

Where it sits in the rules

Cosmetic in the US — FDA primary category **(01) baby products** — with **no premarket approval** and, importantly, **no separate stricter safety standard for children's cosmetics** than for adults'.

It becomes an **OTC drug** with a **skin protectant** claim using a monograph active such as petrolatum (30–100%), dimethicone (1–30%) or allantoin, or with an eczema treatment claim. Colloidal oatmeal at monograph level with an itch-relief claim is likewise a drug active.

Under **MoCRA**, facilities register, products are listed, safety substantiation records must be held, and **serious adverse events are reportable within 15 business days**.

In the EU, **cosmetics for children under three require specific attention in the safety assessment**, preservatives come from the **Annex V closed positive list** of 60 entries, and **methylothiazolinone** is

prohibited in leave-on products.

Shelf life

12 months after opening. A water-based emulsion applied several times a day to a baby; use a pump or tube rather than a tub, and do not decant into unsterile containers.

Discard at separation, discoloration or a change in smell.

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- [Baby](#) — the shelf this sits on, and the rest of it.
- [Cosmetics](#) — what the label is legally allowed to say, and the full catalogue.
- The rest of *Skin* — [Baby Oil](#) · [Baby Cream](#) · [Baby Powder](#) · [Diaper Cream](#).
- [Body Lotion](#) — the adult version.
- Regulatory statements here follow the FDA and EU sources listed on [Cosmetics](#), read 16 August 2026.