

## **Emollients and Infant Massage**

Anita Epple

It was brought to my attention whilst training a group of health visitors that it is not generally recommended by Health Professionals to use emollient creams, such as those used for eczema and other skin conditions, during infant massage.

The NHS and skin consultants advocate that these emollient creams are applied in a light downward sweeping movement (see article above) following the direction of the hair growth, rather like applying butter to toast. This is so that the cream does not clog the follicles and so minimizes the risk of folliculitis (Brown A, Butcher M 2005).

Necessarily, for infant massage the GICM suggests (Vol 1, Issue 5) that firm strokes should be applied in an upward direction working with venous flow, yet this is against the direction of hair growth. To err on the side of caution we would suggest that parents follow guidelines for the application of the emollient and refrain from using it with infant massage to eliminate any risk of infection.

*Reference:*

Brown A, Butcher M (2005) A guide emollient therapy. Nursing Standard. Vol 10, No24, P 68-75