

Avicenna's Creams & Lotions

A booklet explaining the nature and uses of
Avicenna's creams & lotions
for health and beauty

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Contents

	Page
Introduction	2
How Are Creams and Lotions Made	3
Active Ingredients of The Oil Phase	5
Active Ingredients of The Water Phase	9
Preservative Systems	15
Avicenna Product Range	16
Damask Rose Nourish and Hydrate Face Formulation	16
Damask Rose Nourish and Hydrate Lotion Formulation	16
Rose Geranium Combination-Skin Face Formulation	16
Rose Geranium Combination-Skin Lotion Formulation	17
Lavender Everyday Cream	17
Lavender Everyday Body Lotion	18
Chamomile Sensitive Skin Milk	18
Neroli Repair and Rejuvenate Face Formulation	19
Neroli Repair and Rejuvenate Lotion Formulation	19
Witch-hazel lotion	19
Extra-Rich Hemp Seed Cream	20
Peppermint Foot and Hand Refresher	20
Frankincense and Myrrh Regeneration Body Balm	21
Ti-Tree Anti-Breakout Lotion	22
Marigold Cream	22
Comfrey Cream	23
Saint Johns Wort Cream	23
Chickweed cream	24
Echinacea cream	24
Liquorice cream	24
Thuja cream	25
Rheuma cream	25
Venotone	26
Clinicare Cream	26
Avicenna's Skin Kalm Formulation	27
Made to Order Service	28

INTRODUCTION

Increasingly, it is being recognised that we may absorb up to a third of the substances that we put on our skin. It is no wonder then that many people are becoming more aware of the types of products they use on their skin, and have greater interest in the ingredients, preservatives and perfumes used in creams and lotions.

It is with this in mind that we at Avicenna have been formulating creams of exceptional quality. Working with a highly experienced chemist, we have been experimenting with different formulations, oils, preservative systems and active ingredients. We have developed two broad ranges of creams; firstly there are those creams with a more cosmetic focus. Within this range, we have concentrated on getting the right consistency and aroma to make products that are lovely to use as well as being effective. Moreover, these creams are in effect aromatherapy treatments as they all contain aromatic waters and essential oils that provide mental and emotional benefits in addition to the effects on the skin. We have catered for all skin types in the cosmetic range, and to cover all areas of the body. Secondly there is a range of more medicinally orientated creams and lotions, which are slightly heavier due to the higher oil content. There is however a large overlap between the two groupings, with all the creams having therapeutic properties in addition to being lovely to use. All the creams and lotions are made from very high quality, mostly organic aromatic waters, vegetable oils, macerated oils, essential oils and herbal percolates decoctions and infusions. Almost all of the active ingredients are made at Avicenna, including all of the aromatic waters and herbal decoctions and infusion, all of the macerated oils and some of the essential oils. Where we have had to source ingredients, we have worked hard to find the right quality, often rejecting many samples on the way. In standard creams and lotions, the greatest ingredient is usually 'aqua' or water. However, we never add water to the creams (apart from the base cream) - we either use an aromatic water, or herbal infusion/decoction or both. And we have spared no expense when it comes to using the right vegetable oils for our creams; rose hip oil, shea butter, evening primrose oil and avocado oil are all expensive oils that tend to be added in tiny amounts, if they are used at all. We have ensured that these ingredients are added at adequate levels.

In the next section, a brief summary of the nature and properties of the active ingredients used in the creams is given. The second section gives a brief outline of **Avicenna's** approach to preserving creams. The third section is a description of each of our products, with suggestions for skin type and uses. In the final section, our unique made to order service is explained, and an order form is enclosed.

HOW ARE CREAMS AND LOTIONS MADE?

A cream is basically a mixture of oil and water. As you know oil does not readily dissolve or disperse in water, so to allow this to happen, a dispersing agent called an emulsifier is added to the mixture. A cream is therefore a type of emulsion, made of a *water phase* and an *oil phase*.

Emulsifiers 'Unite' Oil with Water

Emulsifiers are substances that have the ability to react with both oil and water. One piece of an emulsifier molecule joins to the molecules of water and another piece joins to the molecules of oil. This allows the oil to disperse as very fine droplets surrounded by emulsifier molecules, into the water medium.

The emulsifier is often a waxy substance (e.g.: Glyceryl Stearate), which is melted into the oil before it is added to the water.

'Oil in Water' and 'Water in Oil' Emulsions

Oil in water emulsions are prepared by dispersing a lesser quantity of oil in a greater quantity of water. The oil phase is called the 'internal phase' because the emulsifier molecules enclose the minute oil droplets as they disperse them through the water medium, which is referred to as the 'external phase'. The oil is 'wrapped within the water'. Such creams have a lighter feel, are more easily absorbed into the skin without leaving an oily residue.

Water in oil emulsions are prepared by dispersing a lesser quantity of water into a greater quantity of oil. Water here is the internal phase because the emulsifier molecules wrap round the minute water droplets as they disperse through the medium of oil, which is the external phase. Such creams tend to have an oily feel and are used to provide an oily barrier, which protects the skin and reduces the loss of moisture in conditions like eczema.

The Water Phase

Water constitutes the major ingredient (61-77%) of most creams, and more so in lotions. The lighter and more cosmetic-type creams contain more water and less oil.

This phase contains the water-soluble herbal ingredients of a cream.

In **Avicenna's** creams, the water phase is never tap or deionised water as is the case with most creams, except in our base cream. We always incorporate beneficial high quality active ingredients into the water phase in the form of distilled aromatic waters, strong infusions and decoctions and cold percolates of organic herbs.

The Oil Phase

Oils make up, anywhere between 11 and 24% of the bulk of a cream. The heavier purely medicinal creams contain a higher proportion of oil but water is still their major ingredient.

Oil-soluble herbal ingredients like resins dissolve and become incorporated into this phase which gives creams a richer and heavier feel. Many oils are susceptible to oxidation or rancidification over a period of time. This process is hindered by the addition of antioxidants like vitamin E, to all our creams and lotions.

Making a cream

The ingredients of the water phase are heated gently until their temperature reaches 70-75 Degrees C.

Simultaneously, the ingredients of the oil phase are heated gently in a separate container again to a temperature of 70-75 Degrees C.

When both phases get to the required temperature the oil phase is poured gradually into the water phase. As this is taking place the mixture is whisked vigorously using a high sheer mixer, which breaks the oil, emulsifier, and water particles into minute droplets. This greatly facilitates the dispersion of oil into water and enhances the stability of the emulsion.

A creamy texture forms after a few minutes of high-sheer high-speed mixing. This is then transferred to a low-shear low-speed stirrer, which gently mixes and turns the cream giving it body and gradually cooling it down. When the temperature of the cream drops down to around 40 Degrees C, heat sensitive ingredients like essential oils and some preservatives are added and stirred in for a few more minutes to ensure uniform dispersal. Here is your cream or lotion, which is now left overnight to cool to room temperature, then filled into sterile containers and sealed.

ACTIVE INGREDIENTS OF THE OIL PHASE

Macerated Oils

Fixed Oils

Essential Oils

Macerated Oils – How do we make them?

Our macerated oils are made by steeping the specified organic herb in a specified organic vegetable oil for a period of one month. Some oils are macerated in clear glass containers and exposed to sunlight throughout this period to affect their extraction, e.g.: St. John's wort oil and marigold oil. Others are macerated in the dark at 37 Degrees C (body temperature), and some oils are extracted at higher temperatures.

In order to assist the active herbal ingredients to dissolve into the oil, the container is shaken vigorously from time to time during the maceration period. When ready, the oil-herb mixture is placed into a muslin bag in an herb press and the oil pressed out, left to sediment and then filtered. Finally, Vitamin E is added to protect the oil from oxidation (rancidification) and the macerated oil stored, with minimum headspace, in a cool dark location.

Macerated Oils used in Avicenna's Creams & Lotions

Chickweed Oil:

Chickweed herb is traditionally used externally for soothing itchy skin conditions such as eczema and pruritis from a variety of causes. It is used as the main oil phase of the chickweed cream.

Comfrey Oil:

Comfrey herb contains the now famous allantoin, which aids the regeneration of all tissues in the body. The mechanism for this appears to be in its ability to encourage fibroblasts to produce connective tissue, cartilage, bone and even neural cells. Allantoin also promotes keratin dispersal and has had some effectiveness in the topical treatment of psoriasis. The recent fashion has been to use allantoin as an isolated constituent within creams and external preparations, but it must be remembered that comfrey contains other constituents that improve its healing effect; these are mucilages which help soothe inflamed skin tissue, tannins which help to contract and form a seal over damaged skin, gums and resin which also aid in tissue repair. The comfrey oil is used as the main oil phase in the comfrey cream. This ensures that both water and oil soluble aspects of the plant are extracted and made available in the cream. It is also used in the Venotone cream.

Hypericum/St. John's wort Oil

This oil is traditionally used for nerve, muscle and joint pain such as neuralgia and sciatica, and it is a great vulnerary. It is the main oil in the Hypericum cream and is used in the Rheuma cream for its analgesic properties. Although

the risk is small, individuals should be careful about using any preparations with Hypericum oil in before going out into the sun as Hypericum does increase photosensitivity.

Marigold/Calendula Oil

Marigold is anti-inflammatory, antiseptic, astringent and promotes granulation of tissue. This has been chosen as one of the main oils in the medicinal creams due to its superb healing properties. Its regenerative properties on the skin are partly due to the presence of the yellow/orange carotenoids in the petals, which are only soluble in fats. It is a superb oil for eczema, nappy rash, cracked skin, varicose veins, and any inflammatory skin problem.

Fixed Oils - What are they?

Fixed oils are made from seeds that are either simply pressed to extract the oil (although this does generate some heat), which produces an oil classified as cold pressed and unrefined. Alternatively, an oil may be further refined by applying external heat, deguming, using bleaching agents and alkalis, and then adding preservatives. Such refined oils tend to be odourless and have less colour and nutrient value. Avicenna uses mainly unrefined, organic oils.

Fixed Oils used in Avicenna's Creams & Lotions

Sweet Almond Oil:

This oil is an ideal oil for cosmetic preparations. It has little smell, stores well, is well tolerated by all skin types, is light and none-greasy and has its own skin nourishing and protective effects. It contains high levels of oleic and linoleic acid. The oil used in Avicenna creams is refined, cosmetic grade oil.

Apricot Kernel Oil:

Apricot kernel oil is exceptionally light and well absorbed by the skin making it ideal for light, facial creams and lotions. It is good for dry, sensitive and inflamed skins.

Avocado Oil:

The oil is extracted from the flesh of the fruit, which contains up to 30% pure oil. This oil is rich in many nutrients including vitamin A and D, lecithin, potassium and chlorophyll. It has its own moisturising properties and helps to nourish mature and weather damaged skin. It is very soothing on dry and inflamed skin such as nappy rash and eczema.

Evening Primrose Oil:

EPO is rich in EFAs, gamma linolenic acid in particular. This oil is soothing and helpful in many inflammatory skin problems such as eczema and psoriasis.

Hemp Seed Oil:

Hemp seed, as we know, contains a good balance of both the omega 3 (alpha linolenic acid) and omega 6 (linoleic acid) essential fatty acids. There is growing evidence for the usefulness of EFAs, both internally and externally in the treatment of inflammatory skin problems such as eczema. This oil is an organic, cold pressed, very high quality hemp seed oil. However, as it is an unstable oil, you may wish to keep this particular cream in the fridge to avoid rancidification.

Jobba Oil:

Jojoba oil is actually a liquid wax rather than a fat and has become well known as an alternative to sperm whale oil. The fact that it is a wax makes jojoba oil very stable with good resistance to oxidation. Jojoba moisturises the skin leaving it feeling smooth and supple, and it is often used for treatment of dry skin and scalp conditions such as psoriasis.

Olive Oil:

Avicenna olive oil is cold pressed, extra virgin. Although a heavy oil on its own, blended with other oils, it is moisturising and has its own antimicrobial properties. Olive oil is high in oleic acid and is a stable oil that does not rancidify easily.

Rosehip Oil:

Research conducted into this oil, extracted from the seeds of a rose which grows wild in South America, shows that it is extremely useful in tissue regeneration for conditions such as burns, facial wrinkles and treatment of scars following surgery. It contains very high levels of both linoleic and linolenic EFAs that may explain some of its actions. It is an ideal oil for aging and weathered skin. As it is an expensive oil, rosehip is used exclusively in the rose cream where it compliments the actions of the rose EO and water perfectly. It is a rather unstable oil too, so Vitamin E is added to help reduce the level of rancidification. The oil used in Avicenna rose cream is organic and unrefined.

Sesame Seed Oil:

The sesame seed oil used in Avicenna creams is organic, cold pressed, raw (unroasted) oil. It is high in the B vitamins, Vitamin E, magnesium, calcium and phosphorus, linolenic and oleic acid. It is a nourishing and moisturising oil on the skin, and due to its own high levels of Vitamin E, it is fairly stable.

Shea Butter:

Shea butter is made from the crushed and processed nuts of the shea tree, and has been used in skin and hair care for centuries. In the parts of Africa where it

is harvested and used locally, it is considered to be a superb skin treatment, even to the point of preventing wrinkles and keeping the skin youthful and blooming. It is a valuable solid oil, making creams thicker and more moisturising.

Wheatgerm Oil:

Wheatgerm is a rich oil, used sparingly for its high vitamin E content. Wheatgerm oil is traditionally used on scars. It helps promote the formation of skin cells, improves the circulation of blood and is helpful for dermatitis. Due to the high levels of anti-oxidants and Vitamin E in the oil, wheatgerm stores reasonably well, and is less prone to rancidification than one might otherwise expect. It contains high levels of linoleic, palmitic and oleic fatty acids.

Essential Oils

Although, essential oils are strictly speaking, part of the oil phase of a cream, information about individual oils is added in the next section, as they reflect to a great extent the herbal ingredients used in the water phase. Essential oils have been added to some creams to supplement the effect of the aromatic water, infusion or decoction and heighten the aroma of the creams. Essential oils have their own therapeutic properties and in many cases enhance preservation the cream. The oils are added at the end of cream making when the cream is cooling, to ensure that as much of their volatile properties are retained as possible. Most of the oils are organic.

ACTIVE INGREDIENTS OF THE WATER PHASE

Aromatic Waters, Infusions & Decoctions

Aromatic waters are used as one of the main water phases in the creams and lotions. They are ideally suited for this purpose, being superb skin treatments in their own rights. They are produced in a specific process using a long water distillation. This produces a water enriched with both the essential oil and the water-soluble components of the plant. On their own, they can be applied to the skin in a sprayer bottle or as a compress, in baths. They may also be taken internally. If you would like to find out more about aromatic waters, Avicenna has a booklet called 'Avicenna's Aromatic Waters: Capturing the Healing Essence', which covers 28 aromatic waters in detail.

Decoctions and infusions are also used in the water phase for non-aromatic plants, roots and barks (such as comfrey or horse chestnut). These are made simply by steeping or simmering the herb in boiling water for about 20 minutes, and then straining off the fluid. This is cooled and added to the cream as required.

Bay

Laurus nobilis

Bay is a warming herb that has been used traditionally for easing aching muscles and rheumatic conditions. The aromatic water and essential oil are used in the Rheuma cream.

Bitter Orange Flower

Citrus aurantium

This water has superb regenerative effects on the skin, improving the skins microcirculation and promoting cellular regeneration. It is a cooling and astringent water for mature, sensitive and weather damaged/thread vein prone skin. The aroma of the water has profoundly calming effect on the nervous system.

The essential oil (organic) of bitter orange flowers is known as neroli and is another very precious floral essential oil, that has been used in the perfume industry and for skin care for many years. On the skin, it has similar nourishing and regenerative features of the water. The fragrance is also extremely calming.

Chickweed

Stellaria media

Chickweed is a soothing and cooling herb that is particularly used to reduce itching. An infusion is used, alongside the macerated oil of chickweed, in the chickweed cream.

Comfrey

Symphytum officinalis

Comfrey contains a great deal of mucilage, a jelly like, soothing substance, which is best extracted through infusion. Mucilages help to protect and soothe surfaces that they come into contact with. It also contains allantoin, which has been discussed in the paragraph on the macerated oil.

Cypress

Cupressus sempervirens

Cypress essential oil (organic) is antiseptic, astringent, styptic, and helps to restore venous circulation. The essential oil is used in the woody aftershave balm for normal to oily skin.

Damask Rose

Rosa damascena

Damask rose water is probably the most luxurious and nourishing facial treatment there is. It is exceptionally cooling and hydrating and is superb for mature, dry and sensitive skins and will help to restore the skin's pH. The water is ideal as a spritzer for menopausal flushes and to take on plane journey's to help keep the face hydrated. Rose is calming and uplifting and a special role in helping people overcome loss and feelings of low self-worth. Damask rose essential oil (organic) is also added to the rose cream and lotion. This is the most precious essential oil one can use, requiring in the region of 30 roses to produce 1 drop of oil. It has excellent hydrating, antiseptic, anti-inflammatory, emollient and astringent properties on the skin. Mood wise, it is used to lift the mood, restore feelings of self-love and self-worth and is considered a female aphrodisiac.

Echinacea

Echinacea purpurea

Echinacea is well known as a remedy taken internally for its immunomodulating effects. But it is also a potent vulnerary – i.e. healing herb when used externally and its anti-microbial action has many uses on the skin. An infusion is made and used in the Echinacea cream

Eucalyptus

Eucalyptus citriodora and globulus

Eucalyptus has good anti-microbial properties. The aromatic water is made from globulus, whereas the essential oil is derived from citriodora which is the most anti-microbial of the eucalyptus species.

Frankincense

Boswellia carterii

Frankincense resin is an ancient incense ingredient and has long been associated with spiritual practice. The water has the same cooling and drying properties as the resin and is ideal used externally for its healing, astringent and antiseptic qualities.

The essential oil of frankincense (wild) promotes skin healing and is quite astringing, helping to tone and firm the skin. It is a calming essential oil that can help to induce a meditative frame of mind, ideal for meditation or spiritual practices.

German Chamomile

Chamomilla recutita

German chamomile is one of the most anti-inflammatory herbs that we have and is hardly surpassed as an external agent. It has appreciable anti-allergy properties and this makes the water ideal for conditions such as allergic eczema/dermatitis, heat rash, urticaria, acne rosacea and almost any hot, inflamed skin condition. It is one of the best waters for sensitive skin.

The essential oil has been shown in research to significantly improve skin healing after using on dermabarsion of tattoos. German chamomile's anti-inflammatory properties have long been appreciated in skin care and for treating inflammatory skin problems. In addition, it is a gentle essential oil, gentle enough to use on babies, children and those with the most sensitive skin. It also has relaxant and calming properties. Avicenna uses organic German chamomile oil.

Ginger

Zingiber officinalis

Ginger water is warming, and is used externally for muscular aches and pains. The essential oil (organic) is similarly diaphoretic, rubefacient, warming and has a general stimulating effect on the nervous system.

Grapefruit

Citrus paradisi

This plant has anti-septic, stimulant and lymphatic stimulant properties, and is ideal for oily skin. The essential oil (organic) is used in the woody aftershave balm for normal to oily skin.

Greek Sage

Salvia triloba

Greek sage is a general tonic herb and has outstanding antimicrobial properties against Streptococcal, Staphylococcal and fungal infections. Both the aromatic water and essential oil (organic) are used in the Clinicare cream.

Horse chestnut

Aesculus hippocastanum

Horse chestnut is a very traditional remedy for varicose veins, thread veins, venous insufficiency and related ankle/leg swelling. The action of the fruit is anti-inflammatory and astringent. A decoction is made and used in the Venotone cream.

Lavender

Lavandula angustifolia

Lavender water is one of the most versatile waters there is. It is suited to any skin type, having a balancing actions both on the skin and nervous system. It is particularly useful as an after sun application and for helping to relieve headaches of nervous origin, applied as a cold compress over the eyes and forehead.

Lavender essential oil (organic) is similarly balancing, both on the skin and mood. It has excellent antiseptic and healing properties and yet is one of the least toxic and most gentle of all essential oils in that it can be applied neat to the skin. Its ability to help heal burns has been well researched and documented. Lavender, although uplifting, will also aid sleep and is an ideal oil to use for sleep problems

Liquorice

Glycyrrhiza glabra

Liquorice root has long been valued as an internal remedy for a range of problems. However, more is being discovered about its powerful anti-inflammatory actions directly on the skin and mucous membranes. It is being used more and more in stomach ulcers for its direct healing and soothing effect. In addition, an anti-viral effect has been found against the herpes virus which is responsible for cold sores. Liquorice has soothing and emollient properties on the skin and is used in decoction form in the liquorice cream.

Marigold

Calendula officinalis

Marigold infusion is used in the marigold cream. Many of the active constituents of marigold are water soluble, so the infusion is used in the cream alongside the macerated oil. Marigold is antimicrobial, anti-viral, styptic, astringent and anti-inflammatory. It promotes granulation of damaged tissue thus speeding repair and healing.

Myrrh

Commiphora mol-mol

Another ancient medicine, myrrh has been used as far back as the Egyptians. The water is strongly antimicrobial and is ideal for chronic skin problems that are slow to heal. It has similar cooling and drying properties as frankincense. Myrrh essential oil (wild) has outstanding antiseptic properties and is particularly useful for helping to heal old wounds, ulcers and stubborn/chronic skin conditions. It is quite astringent and has good anti-fungal properties.

Peppermint

Mentha X piperita

Mint, in small amounts, is very cooling, and the water is an ideal preparation for exploiting this cooling property. It has a clean, uplifting and stimulating smell making it ideal for situations where alertness and clarity of mind are required.

The essential oil of peppermint (organic) has the curious effect of causing the skin to feel cool if used in small amounts, and heating the skin if used in larger amounts. It is also stimulating and helps to clear the mind. It is used in small amounts (less than 1%) in the Peppermint Hand and Foot Refresher to give a pleasant cooling effect.

Roman Chamomile

Chamaemelum nobile

Although Roman chamomile water and essential oil has, to a lesser degree, some of the same anti-inflammatory properties as German chamomile, its main action is in its relaxing and calming actions on the nervous system. Organic aromatic water and essential oil are used.

Rose geranium

Pelargonium graveolens

Rose geranium is one of the most important skin care waters. It has a balancing effect on sebum production making ideal for those with combination skin. The fragrance is gorgeous and in terms of aromatherapy, helps to balance the endocrine system and has an uplifting and tonifying action on the nervous system. Rose geranium is the perfect water for women who suffer hormonally related skin outbreaks.

The essential oil of rose geranium (organic) is a wonderful balancing nervine, ideal for hormonal mood swings. It shares similar healing, astringent and sebum balancing properties to the water. It is a good lymphatic stimulant too.

Rosemary

Rosmarinus officinalis

Rosemary is a stimulating herb, which helps to support the adrenal glands and improve circulation. Externally, the water has good anti-microbial properties and can be used for stiff and painful joints and muscles. Rosemary water has been used traditionally on the hair and scalp to make hair glossy and improve circulation to the scalp.

The essential oil (organic) is even more stimulating and uplifting, and helps to clear and focus the mind. It is quite warming on the skin and aids circulation.

Sandalwood

Santalum album

Sandalwood essential oil (organic) is firming and hydrating on the skin and is used in the woody aftershave balm for dry and sensitive skin.

Tea Tree

Melaleuca alternifolia

Both the aromatic water and essential oil (organic) of this plant are used in the Tea tree anti-break-out Lotion. Tea tree is well known for its antimicrobial, and anti-fungal properties.

Vetivert

Vetiveria zizanoides

The essential oil of Vetivert (organic) is distilled from a grass and produces a fascinating smoky, earthy smell. It is used in the woody aftershave balm for dry and sensitive skin because of its skin-nourishing and hydrating properties and its calming aroma.

Witch-hazel

Hamamelis virginicus

This famous water has a lovely woody smell. It offers many benefits to the skin, due to its strong anti-oxidant, astringing and anti-inflammatory properties. It is ideal for tightening puffy skin areas, and for oily skin in general. It can be applied to weeping skin conditions, varicose veins and bruises and swellings. It is particularly suited to weathered and sun damaged skin.

Yarrow

Achillea millefolium

Traditionally used as a wound healing and staunching remedy, yarrow flowers are anti-inflammatory, anti-allergenic, haemostatic, astringent, and styptic. The water is an ideal external treatment for varicose veins, varicose eczema, thread veins and weeping skin conditions.

PRESERVATIVE SYSTEMS

Although the aim of this booklet is to describe the actions of the active ingredients used in Avicenna creams, we could not sidestep the very topical issue of preservation of creams. That we have to preserve creams in some way or other is not disputed. An unpreserved cream will quickly turn into an unpleasant, mouldy mess. Ointments can be made without preservatives, but they are not suitable for facial skin or for cosmetic purposes, and even medicinal ointments have their limitations. There are some natural preservatives available such as grapeseed extract and Biovert milk enzyme. We have used the latter, and found that we had variable success. It will hold some formulations quite well, especially those containing essential oils and those kept in the fridge, but other creams may start to get mouldy relatively quickly if handled incorrectly. Natural preservatives may slow down the rate at which a cream will go off, but they cannot compete with the broad-spectrum range of the synthetic preservatives such as the mixed parabens and phenoxyethanol. Some companies have had success using a combination of natural preservatives and tube-style packaging which reduces contamination of the product thus enhancing its shelf life. This only works if packaging directly for retail use into sterile, air tight tubes. Avicenna, on the other hand, supplies creams in large tubs for bulk use by practitioners and it is impossible to control the level of contamination of the cream in this situation, as naturally the therapist will constantly dispense from the larger tub, before the customer has even started to use and contaminate it further!

Currently, Avicenna creams are preserved using mixed parabens and phenoxyethanol. These preservatives are approved by the appropriated authorities as safe to use, but we obviously wish to keep their exposure to a minimum.

Although this looks like a long list of chemicals, by using a mixture, the overall amount of parabens can be kept to a minimum as they enhance each others' effectiveness. Secondly, we use the lowest amounts we can effectively get away with. For example, up to 1% is allowed by law, but we use 0.3% to 0.5%. We are committed to working towards a natural preservative system. In the meantime, by offering a made to order service, you can access naturally preserved creams as and when you require them, using grapeseed extract or Biovert.

Apart from the preservative, we do not add any other artificial ingredients. There are no colourings or artificial perfumes, so our creams are about as natural as is realistically achievable at the current time.

AVICENNA PRODUCT RANGE

Damask Rose Nourish and Hydrate Face Formulation

Active Ingredients

Damask rose aromatic water, damask rose essential oil, rose-hip oil, almond oil, avocado oil, shea butter.

Description:

A rich but light and fluffy cream that is very easily absorbed into the skin. Suitable for face and body. It has a very pure and sweet rose smell. White with a hint of pink in colour. On application, leaves the skin feeling cool and moisturised.

Skin/Person Profile:

Normal to dry skin, mature and aging skin, sun and weather damaged skin. Sensitive skin, where there is too much heat. Skin prone to thread veins. Ideal for people who have experienced loss, and wish to have more love in their lives. People who are angry, fearful, disappointed and anxious – hot.

Uses

Most appropriately, this is the most luxurious and exquisitely scented cream of the Avicenna range, as Avicenna himself (the 10th Century Persian Herbalist) was the first to distil roses and make rose water. It is made from the highest quality ingredient with all the superb skin-nourishing properties of rose and rose hip oil. It is suitable as a face and neck cream for mature, dry or sensitive skin, (although it will benefit all skin types). Rose hip oil is amazingly rich in linoleic and linolenic essential fatty acids which have been found to help in the regeneration and repair of skin tissue.

Many people have found this cream useful for eczema and dry, inflamed skin, and it is gentle enough for babies too.

Damask Rose Nourish and Hydrate Lotion Formulation

This light lotion contains all the same ingredients as the cream. It can be used as a body lotion, and can also be used as a moisturising facial cleanser for removing make-up and dirt, followed by the rose water as a toner.

Rose Geranium Combination-Skin Face Formulation

Active Ingredients

Rose geranium aromatic water and essential oil, almond oil, avocado oil, and Vitamin E.

Description:

A light cream that is readily absorbed into the skin leaving no feeling of oiliness. The odour is fresh, sweet, green and the cream is white in colour. Can be used on the face and body

Skin/Person Profile:

Can be used on any skin type. Ideal for combination, oily, blemished or scarred skin. Skin worse premenstrually or due to hormonal disorders such as PCOD. Ideal for women whose moods are very influenced by their menstrual cycle.

Uses

Rose geranium is traditionally used for blemished, oily, congested, spotty, sluggish and combination skin. It helps to normalise sebum production without being too drying and is superb for premenstrual skin outbreaks, acne vulgaris and rosacea. The oil has excellent cicasitrant properties too, making it ideal for use in treating scarring, either alone, or in combination with other herbs such as comfrey. Its beautiful aroma is calming and uplifting. This cream is ideal as a face cream.

Rose Geranium Combination-Skin Lotion Formulation

The lotion has the same ingredients and properties as the cream and is a lovely cooling, non-oily lotion for applying all over the body. It may also be used as a facial cleanser, followed by the rose geranium water as a refreshing toner.

Lavender Everyday Cream**Ingredients**

Lavender aromatic water, lavender essential oil, almond oil, evening primrose oil and avocado oil.

Description:

A light cream, with the fresh, herbaceous smell of lavender. The cream is white.

Skin/Person Profile:

This cream can be used on any skin type. Ideal for people who are stressed, suffer nervous headaches or sleep problems.

Uses

The essence of lavender is captured in this balancing and restorative cream, which may be used for medicinal or purely cosmetic purposes. The versatility of lavender is renowned. This is the one cream that has the versatility to cope with all skin types and many diverse skin problems. Lavender has been used traditionally on minor burns, minor sunburn, insect bites, cuts, spots, eczema

and any inflamed skin condition. This cream, with its fresh lavender perfume, makes an ideal after-sun cream or general-purpose body and face lotion. It is gentle enough to use on babies and children too, and makes a good cream for nappy rash and eczema. Try using it after a bath to aid sleep. Emotionally lavender will help stress whilst being uplifting – it is balancing. Ideal to take away on holiday as an after-sun cream and insect repellent cream.

Lavender Everyday Body Lotion

The lotion contains the same ingredients and properties as the cream. It is ideal as a light after sun lotion and may also be used as a facial cleanser, followed by the lavender water as a toner.

Chamomile Sensitive Skin Milk

Active Ingredients

German and Roman chamomile aromatic waters and essential oils, marigold macerated oil, evening primrose oil, almond oil, and Vitamin E.

Description:

A light, cooling lotion which is readily absorbed by the skin. Has a light, delicate herby smell and is yellowy-white in colour.

Skin/Person Profile:

Can be used on any skin type. Particularly helpful on hot, inflamed, sensitive skin. Similarly good for tired, irritable and sensitive individuals and grumpy children.

Uses:

With the strongly anti-inflammatory effects of German chamomile and the calming properties of Roman chamomile, this light and very cooling lotion can be used on any hot, dry and inflamed skin conditions such as urticaria and hives, eczema, psoriasis, and acne (including acne rosacea). It is gentle enough to use on babies in infantile eczema and nappy rash and is suitable for grumpy crybabies of all ages! Roman chamomile is particularly suited to children who are irritable and overtired. Use as a soothing bedtime massage lotion for children at bedtime after a bath, or to calm down overtired children.

The evening primrose and marigold oils nourish and soothe the skin and marigold oil aids healing of the skin.

This milk is an ideal cleanser for sensitive skin, and may be followed by the German or Roman chamomile aromatic waters as a facial toner.

Neroli Repair and Rejuvenate Face Formulation

Active Ingredients

Bitter orange flower water, neroli essential oil, almond oil, avocado oil, shea butter.

Description:

A medium weight cream with a bitter/sweet fragrance, very easily absorbed by the skin. The cream is white. Can be used on the face and body.

Skin/Person Profile:

Can be used on all skin types. Ideal for mature, sensitive skin and skin prone to thread veins. Skin that needs to be 'nourished'. Ideal for tense individuals, prone to palpitations and gut cramps when stressed.

Uses

Bitter orange flowers are used to make the exquisite neroli essential oil. In this cream, the benefits of both the essential oil and aromatic water are present, along with the moisturising properties of avocado oil and shea butter. It may be used alone or in combination with other ingredients in sensitive and mature skin, and skin prone to thread veins. In addition, the strongly relaxing fragrance of neroli has its own calming effect on the nervous system. It is ideal to use after a bath at bedtime to aid a good nights sleep

Neroli Repair and Rejuvenate Lotion Formulation

This light and beautifully fragranced lotion is a lovely body skin treatment in its own right and may also be used as a facial cleanser, followed by the neroli aromatic water as a toner.

Witch-hazel lotion

Active Ingredients

Witch hazel aromatic water, apricot kernel oil, evening primrose oil, almond oil, and Vitamin E.

Description:

A white, light lotion. It has a gentle fragrance, with woody witch hazel undertones.

Skin/Person Profile

Oily and puffy skin, skin prone to thread veins; very weathered skin. For people who are outdoors a great deal.

Uses

A light and cooling cream, with good astringent properties, ideal for greasy skin or puffy areas such as under the eyes. Witch hazel has superb anti-oxidant properties and this makes it ideal for weather-damaged skins and as a protective cream for those who spend much time outdoors. The apricot kernel oil is light and non-greasy – ideal for facial skin, and the evening primrose oil soothes and nourishes sensitive skin. Very cooling and soothing on sun and wind-burned skin. It makes an ideal cream for haemorrhoids, either alone, or combined with other ingredients and may also be applied to weeping eczema and insect bites. Finally, it can be used as a cleanser for oily or puffy skin, followed by the witch-hazel water as an astringing toner.

Extra-Rich Hemp Seed Cream

Active Ingredients

De-ionised water, organic unrefined hemp seed oil, vitamin E.

Description:

A heavier cream but with good spreading properties and having a lovely mild nutty smell. Can be used on face, body, hands and feet. A very pale green in colour.

Skin/Person Profile:

Very dry and cracked skin, very dry skin conditions.

Uses

This cream can be used on its own as a general-purpose moisturiser for dry/sensitive skin, allergic and eczematous conditions. Alternatively, other ingredients such as essential oils, vegetable oils, and aromatic waters may be added. The cream, although of a light consistency, holds other ingredients well and will take up a surprisingly large amount whilst maintaining a lovely smooth consistency. Due to the presence of hemp seed oil (which can be unstable), you may wish to keep this cream in the fridge. Vitamin E has been added to reduce the rancidification of the oil.

Peppermint Foot and Hand Refresher

Active Ingredients:

Peppermint aromatic water and essential oil, almond oil, shea butter, comfrey macerated oil, vitamin E.

Description:

A rich lotion for the hands and feet which leaves the skin feeling cool and refreshed. Has the clear, refreshing menthol fragrance of peppermint. White in colour.

Skin/Person Profile:

Suitable for all skin types of the hand and feet. Ideal for people who are feeling mentally confused, overloaded or generally finding concentration difficult.

Uses:

We absorb more through our feet and hands than through many other areas of skin on our bodies, so using this cream will provide an instant 'pick me up' sensation. It is ideal as a general hand cream and makes a lovely refreshing and cooling foot cream, especially in the summer months. Could be used as part of reflexology treatment.

Peppermint can be used on other parts of the body, but care should be taken as menthol can be an irritant on some skins. However, peppermint can be helpful in some kinds of eczema where its cooling properties (at low concentrations less than 1% - higher concentrations can be heating) bring relief from itchy, hot skin.

Ideal to take to work to keep cool, calm and collected.

Precaution:

Not suitable for babies and young children. Those with sensitive or irritated skin should conduct a patch test before use.

Frankincense and Myrrh Regeneration Body Balm**Active Ingredients:**

Frankincense and myrrh aromatic waters and essential oils, sweet almond oil, avocado oil, shea butter.

Description:

A rich lotion for the body, face and hands. Has a warm, sweet, spicy smell, with slightly lemon top notes.

Skin/Person Profile

All skin types. Skin that feels 'tired' and dull. Skin prone to chronic and stubborn conditions. Ideal for people who are anxious and stressed, or wish to enhance their spirituality.

Uses

Makes a luxurious and exotic skin treat for all skin types, although it is particularly suited to 'tired' and mature skin in need of a lift. Myrrh is legendary for its use in the treatment of chronic wounds and ulcers so this lotion could be used on wounds that are slow to heal, weepy eczema, stretch marks and fungal skin infections. It can also be applied to cracked feet and hands.

Precautions

Avoid in pregnancy as myrrh is a powerful uterine stimulant.

Tea-Tree Anti-Breakout Lotion

Active Ingredients

Tea-tree aromatic water, tea tree essential oil, apricot kernel oil, evening primrose oil

Description

A light, non-oily white lotion with the fresh, rather antiseptic aroma of tea tree.

Skin/Person Profile

Ideal for oily, spotty skin, skin prone to outbreaks of spots/boils, or .

Uses

Tea-tree is well known for its anti-fungal and antibacterial actions. It is ideal for infected skin lesions, and this lotion may also be used on fungal infections such as athlete's foot, fungal nail-infections. Tea tree lotion may be used as a face cream for oily, spotty skin, prone to breakouts. The apricot kernel oil has been chosen as it is a light, non-greasy oil, ideal for use on the facial skin. Evening primrose helps calm inflamed and irritated skin.

Precautions:

Tea Tree can be sensitising in some individuals. People with sensitive skin or who have not tried Tea tree products before are advised to conduct a patch test before use.

Marigold Cream

Active Ingredients

Marigold infusion and marigold macerated oil (in olive), evening primrose oil, wheatgerm oil, shea butter, and Vitamin E.

Uses

Calendula cream is a multi-purpose cream for cuts, grazes and cracked skin. It may form the base of a healing cream for wounds, ulcers and applying to scar tissue, or for treating fungal infections such as ringworm or thrush. The wheatgerm oil is also healing and evening primrose oil soothes inflamed and irritated skin.

Comfrey Cream

Active Ingredients

Comfrey leaf infusion and comfrey macerated oil (in olive oil) wheatgerm oil, evening primrose oil, shea butter, and Vitamin E.

Uses

Like the chickweed cream, this preparation combines the benefits of both the water and oil soluble constituents of comfrey. The healing and stimulating properties of comfrey on both connective and epithelial tissue are legendary. The wheatgerm oil is also healing and evening primrose oil soothes inflamed and irritated skin. This cream is ideal for use on slow healing wounds, scars and for strengthening skin that is fragile and easily cracks.

Precautions:

Some authorities state that comfrey should be used with care on deep and infected wounds to avoid the possibility of 'locking in' deep infections by promoting rapid surface healing.

Saint John's Wort Cream

Active ingredients

Infusion and macerated oil of St John's wort (in olive oil), evening primrose oil.

Description

A pink cream (due to the natural colour of the St John's wort oil), moderately thick, with a light herby smell.

Uses

St John' wort is traditionally used externally as a vulnerary and for nerve pain. This easy to use, non-greasy formulation is a good alternative to the oil and may be massaged in over areas of musculo-skeletal and nerve pain. Regular application is required.

Precautions:

Hypericum may increase sensitivity to sunlight. Avoid direct exposure to a sunbed or strong sunlight on treated skin for 12 hours after application.

Chickweed cream**Active Ingredients**

Chickweed infusion and macerated oil (in olive oil), shea butter, almond oil.

Description

A thick cream with an off-white colour. Has a biscuity smell and a pale green colour.

Uses

The cooling and anti-itch properties of chickweed hardly need an introduction. This cream combines the benefit of both the water and oil soluble constituents of the plant. This cream is also ideal as a base cream for adding more ingredients.

Echinacea cream**Active Ingredients**

Echinacea decoction and marigold macerated oil (in olive oil).

Description

A thick cream with an off-white colour.

Uses

Echinacea was traditionally use by many Native American peoples as a healing herb, applied externally. It is particularly useful applied to chronic skin infections, infected eczema, acne and viral infections such as warts.

Liquorice cream**Active Ingredients**

Liquorice percolate, marigold macerated oil (in olive oil), jojoba oil and shea butter.

Description

A heavier cream with moisturising and good emollient properties. Slight brown colour with a biscuity smell.

Uses

Liquorice has superb anti-inflammatory and emollient actions on the skin, and may be used as a healing cream and on any inflammatory skin problem such as eczema or psoriasis. Liquorices' emollient properties may also be useful in creams for vaginal dryness. It has appreciable anti-fungal properties, and glycyrrhizin is active against the herpes virus. Indeed, there is evidence that this constituent may permanently deactivate the herpes virus. Jojoba oil and shea butter have good emollient and moisturising properties and the marigold macerated oil also aids healing. The gentle, soothing nature of this cream makes it ideal therefore for genital thrush and genital herpes (conduct a patch test before use). It may also be used on dry, irritated skin conditions such as eczema craquelé.

Thuja cream

Active Ingredients

Thuja decoction and aromatic water, witch hazel aromatic water, marigold macerated oil, St John's wort macerated oil (both in olive oil), almond oil.

Description

A pale yellowy pink cream with pleasant woody/evergreen smell.

Uses

Thuja is traditionally used for 'shrinking' growths, including warts, and is thought to reduce the increased epithelial skin-cell turnover in psoriasis. The witch hazel's astringent properties complement this action. Thuja has good anti-microbial properties.

Precautions

Avoid in pregnancy and lactation

Rheuma cream

Active Ingredients

Rosemary, bay and ginger aromatic waters and essential oils; St. John's wort macerated oil (in olive oil) shea butter.

Description

A light, pale pink cream with a mild, warm and spicy smell.

Uses

This warming and stimulating cream is ideal for use on muscular aches and strains and osteo-arthritic joints. Also useful on swellings due to fluid retention

and bruises. Rosemary and ginger stimulate the circulation, ginger has anti-inflammatory properties and bay is a traditional remedy for muscular and rheumatic conditions. In addition, the St. John's wort oil brings its own healing and analgesic properties.

Contra-indications

Avoid using on hot, inflamed joints and muscles. Wash hands well after use and avoid contact with eyes and mucous membranes. Avoid in pregnancy

Venotone

Active Ingredients

Yarrow aromatic water, horse chestnut decoction, witch hazel aromatic water and marigold macerated oil, comfrey macerated oil (in olive oil).

Description

A light, white cream.

Uses

Yarrow and horse chestnut are traditionally used to help improve varicose veins, and in combination with witch hazel, they may also help the appearance of thread veins. Yarrow is a traditional vulnerary and has similar anti-inflammatory properties to chamomile. Comfrey macerated oil strengthens connective tissue. This cream is ideal alone or in combination with other ingredients for applying to varicose veins, varicose eczema and oedema due to venous insufficiency.

Precautions:

Yarrow essential oil is traditionally avoided during pregnancy. It is unclear whether this also extends to the aromatic water. Practitioners must use their discretion in this case.

Clinicare Cream

Active Ingredients

Greek sage and eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus citriodora*) aromatic waters and essential oils, and marigold macerated oil.

Description

A white, moderately thick cream with a very herby, fresh and menthol smell.

Uses

This cream contains two strongly antiseptic herbs - Greek sage and eucalyptus. Eucalyptus citriodora is the most anti-bacterial of the various types of eucalyptus. This cream is ideal as a general-purpose antiseptic cream, for applying to minor cuts, grazes and could also be used on individual spots and boils. Greek sage has superb antifungal and antibacterial actions. This cream may be too strong to use on the face and genital area - we advise patients to undertake a patch test, or to dilute the cream in base cream if wishing to treat these areas.

Contra-indications

Avoid during pregnancy.

Avicenna's Skin-Kalm Formulation

Active Ingredients

Damask rose, lavender and chamomile aromatic waters and essential oils, liquorice decoction, marigold macerated in almond and olive oil, shea butter and evening primrose oil.

Description

A moderately thick cream, with a slight creamy-yellow colour (due to the rose and marigold). Has a lovely delicate, floral scent.

Uses

This beautifully scented and very popular cream is used for a wide range of skin problems, with all the benefits of rose, chamomile and lavender in one cream. Its soothing, anti-inflammatory properties make it ideal for eczema and any hot, inflamed skin condition. The liquorice has added anti-inflammatory and emollient properties.

MADE TO ORDER SERVICE

Avicenna has a unique made to order facility, whereby you can specify your required cream formulation and we will make it for you, dependent on availability of ingredients. Here are some of the ways in which this service might be of benefit to you:

- We can make batches of cream with natural preservative systems such as biovert or grapeseed extract, or even no preservative, if required. These will be sent to you by next day delivery.
- We can make formulations with specific active ingredients that you wish to use.
- We can make creams, lotions and ointments of specific consistencies.

The made to order service must fit into the following criteria:

- The minimum batch size is 5 kilos.
- Any ingredients that we do not keep in stock (i.e. is not listed in this document) must be supplied by the customer.
- We require at least 3 weeks notice for making the cream.
- We offer a basic cream formulation and lotion formulation. We cannot guarantee the impact of any other ingredients on the texture or consistency of the cream that you wish to add.
- Creams preserved with natural preservatives or no preservative have a limited shelf-life. We will get the cream to you next day, but once it has arrived, we cannot be responsible for any spoilage that may occur. Biovert preserved creams can last for months if refrigerated and handled in a sterile manner. The addition of essential oils also seems to prolong the creams life. Creams with no preservative at all must be kept refrigerated and used within a week or so.
- There is a standard fee for making the cream, which includes the cost of ingredients supplied by us. Any special requirements would need to be discussed and then a quote could be given.

To access this service, simply ring Avicenna on 01570 471 000. You will be sent a form, either by post, fax or email to fill in which will clarify your requirements. Once the form is completed, the cream will be available within 3 weeks and once made, will be sent to you by next day delivery service.