

	Questions	YES	NO	Comments
1	<b>Is your child between the ages of 6 months and 16 years?</b>			Dates relate to <u>age at baseline visit, not today's date</u> . i.e. child must be at least 6 months old at baseline, or not have 17th birthday before baseline visit. It is ok to become 17 years old during the 16-week study period. If the family have more than one child with eczema it is important that they decide which child will be the 'index case' for the study.
2	<b>Do you live near one of the study centres / in a hard water area?</b>			Establish willingness to travel for clinic visits. If Nottingham/Notts check hardness from post-code on Severn Trent website <a href="http://www.stwater.co.uk">www.stwater.co.uk</a>
3	<b>Do you live in a property which is less than 5 storeys high?</b>			If high rise block of flats, family must live on first 4 floors to be eligible
4	<b>Do you already have a plumbed-in water softener device? (Not a drinking water filter). This includes ion-exchange softeners, polyphosphate dosing units, physical conditioners or any other treatment system aimed at reducing scale?</b>			If the home clearly has an ion-exchange water softener or any other "softening" device they are ineligible to enter the trial. If they're not sure if they have a water softener device or not, the study will send a water engineer to check the home. [NOTE: some modern boilers have water softeners attached to them e.g. the Combi-mate is a polyphosphate dosing unit. There is also a physical conditioner device called the Salamander]
5	<b>Do you have any plans to refit or modify your kitchen over the next 6 months?</b>			It is important that the kitchen plumbing and layout doesn't change between the original home screen and the date for installation, otherwise we might find an installation isn't technically possible after the participant has been randomised to the study.
6	<b>Does your child mainly live and sleep at this address?</b>			To ensure adequate exposure to the intervention, maximum time child can be away over next 4/5 months = 21 days. Ask about holidays planned over the next few months.
7	<b>Has your child</b> i) started a new treatment regimen for their eczema within the last 4 weeks? ii) Taken oral steroids within the last 4 weeks? iii) Taken systemic medication for their eczema within the last 3 months? (e.g. cyclosporine A, methotrexate) iv) had UV therapy for their eczema in the last 3 months?			If any of these are answered YES, this does not immediately exclude the child because these time frames relate to the date of the baseline visit, which could be scheduled for a date when all answers will be NO.

	<b>Other topics to go though:</b>	
<b>8</b>	<b>Do you live in your own home, or is it rented?</b>	<p>If rented, a letter will need to be sent to their landlord, or property owner, to ask permission for a water softener to be installed. We can supply a standard letter for them to send. Permission must be obtained BEFORE anything else can happen. If it is a council property, check if permission has been obtained from the relevant local council for softener installations</p>
<b>9</b>	<b>Have you read the Parents Information Sheet / FAQ about the study?</b>	<p>If no, send a copy of PIS plus age-related copies and FAQ (latest version), or give them study website address if they have access to the internet  <a href="http://www.swet-trial.co.uk">www.swet-trial.co.uk</a></p>
<b>10</b>	<b>Do you know how the water softener is installed?</b>	<p>Explain that the water softener unit will usually be installed underneath the kitchen sink, but, for practical reasons this may not always be possible e.g. it could end up being installed in a nearby cupboard.</p> <p>Explain there are four connections: inlet, outlet, drain and overflow, and that the overflow is a ½” (12 mm) pipe which needs to be run through an outside wall (as a safety device to alert the householder if a fault develops).</p> <p>Explain as a routine part of the installation they will be provided with an extra tap at the side of the kitchen sink (usually faucet-style) to provide mains (non-softened) water for drinking. This involves drilling a small 3/8” (10mm) hole in the kitchen worktop. At the end of the study the drinking tap will be removed and the hole capped off, or the tap can be left in place if they want to keep it e.g. to use it to supply water from a drinking water filter.</p> <p>They can opt-out of having the separate tap if they want to. Discuss different options: drinking softened water / buying bottled water / un-softened water through a kitchen 3-way tap (if they have this) or a tap on the front of an American-style fridge.</p>
<b>11</b>	<b>What happens next?</b>	<p>If all of the above is OK, parents will be contacted by John Kyle from the SWET Engineering Team (or MG Heating on Isle of Wight) to arrange for one of their water engineers to carry out a Home Screening Visit to check the <b>water hardness level</b> and whether the home is suitable for installation of the water softener. This will take about 30 minutes. To be eligible for the trial your water hardness needs to <math>\geq 200</math> mg calcium carbonate/litre (<math>&gt;80</math> mg/l calcium).</p>
<b>12</b>	<b>Suitable days/dates/times for engineer visit?</b>	<p>Explain that the SWET engineers are really busy guys, working not just on our study - and often travelling long distances to cover our SWET homes. So it is really helpful for the study if the parent can be (i) as flexible as possible when agreeing with an engineer a time/date and (ii) be aware that if they change the appointment at the last minute, it may be up to 2 weeks before the engineer can find another slot. As our study has a relatively short study period (just 16 weeks) an unexpected delay of 2 weeks can cause significant problems for us.</p>