

PATIENT INFORMATION

Lidocaine Plasters: Outpatient Pain Management Clinic

Lidocaine plasters have been recommended as a short course treatment for you on advice from the specialist pain team. Please read this information sheet and the manufacturer's patient information leaflet that is inside each pack of lidocaine plasters. Your doctor, nurse, GP or pharmacist will be happy to answer any further questions you may have.

What are lidocaine plasters?

They are medicated plasters that contain lidocaine. Lidocaine is a local anaesthetic medicine. Local anaesthetics are used to temporarily block pain messages travelling along pain nerves.

What are lidocaine plasters used for?

Lidocaine plasters are used for nerve (neuropathic) pain. This is when nerves are irritated/ damaged and starts to send faulty messages to the brain resulting in pain, numbness or tingling. If the nerve pain is in one area, a lidocaine plaster may help.

Lidocaine plasters offer an alternative to strong pain drugs and can help manage pain in patients with a proven neuropathic component. The plasters have minimal side effects as the medication stays localised to the skin where the plaster is applied. You may experience skin irritation such as redness, a rash, burning sensation or itchiness.

How does the plaster work?

The plaster contains lidocaine (a local anaesthetic). When the plaster is applied to the painful area, lidocaine is slowly absorbed into the skin and attaches to the irritated nerves in that area. Lidocaine blocks the irritated nerves from sending signals to the brain that reduces pain. The plaster can feel cool when applied and many patients find the cooling sensation to be pleasant.

How long do I keep the plaster on?

You can use up to three plasters that can only be worn for a maximum of 12 hours out of a 24 hour day. If the plaster is left on for too long you may experience signs of lidocaine toxicity such as:

- Buzzing in the ears, blurred or double vision
- Light headedness, dizziness, drowsiness
- Confusion, numbness or twitching.

If any of the above symptoms occur, remove the plaster immediately and seek medical advice.

Your skin may also get irritated if the plaster is left on too long.

When should the plasters be applied?

Apply the plasters when your pain is worst. They can be worn during the day or night. Try to avoid contact with water whilst wearing the plaster/s as they will fall off.

Please only apply the plaster to the area that is painful.

How long will I need to use the plasters for?

Outpatients: You should use the plasters for a minimum of two weeks (unless you get unacceptable side effects) before finally deciding if they are helpful for your pain or not. If they are not helpful, stop using them and let the person who prescribed them know.

You must make an appointment to see your GP for a review of the plasters after 2 weeks of use. This is to assess whether you should stop using or continue with the treatment. If your GP agrees to continue the plasters for a further length of time, you will be invited back to your GP within 3 months for another review of the treatment

Patients who respond to the plasters initially, may find either the effect wears off, or the pain condition improves. This is why we recommend that you are reviewed every few months.

If whilst you are waiting for a review, you notice that the pain has worsened please contact your GP.

If you do not attend your GP appointments, your prescription may be stopped.

How can I reduce and stop my lidocaine plasters?

Your GP or pain specialist will discuss with you how to reduce and stop your lidocaine plasters as your pain starts to settle. Options include:

- **A trial without a lidocaine plaster.** If your pain symptoms are manageable after 24 hours then the plasters can be stopped.
- **Increasing the length of time without a lidocaine plaster.** The 12 hours without a plaster can be extended gradually until the plasters can be stopped completely.

- **Reducing the amount of lidocaine plaster being used.** If the area of pain has been reduced in size, the plasters can be cut into smaller pieces. Alternatively, reduce to one plaster if you have been using more.

What should I do if pain increases when I stop or reduce using the lidocaine plasters?

See if the pain settles. If the pain continues, please discuss with your GP. Or you may want to try to manage the pain in another way such as:

- Heat/ cold pack / Massage
- Gentle activity such as yoga, tai chi, short walks
- Relaxation, deep breathing, meditation and distraction

Further information on managing your pain can be found on the following website:

www.torbayandsouthdevon.nhs.uk/reconnect2life

For further assistance or to receive this information in a different format, please contact the department which created this leaflet.