

## PATIENT INFORMATION

# Lidocaine Plasters: for Rib Fracture and Total Knee/ Hip Replacement Protocols

Lidocaine plasters have been recommended as a two week 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 start 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 medicines 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, and 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.

## **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.

Only apply the plaster to the area that is painful.

## **How long will I need to use the plasters for?**

**Inpatients:** If you have been prescribed lidocaine plasters during your stay in hospital, this is usually a two week treatment and will have a documented time period. Once you have used up the lidocaine plasters supplied by the hospital, your GP will not prescribe anymore unless under the advice of a specialist pain team.

## **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](http://www.torbayandsouthdevon.nhs.uk/reconnect2life)

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