



Pain Management Team: Chronic Pain Service

Lidocaine 5% Patches (Versatis)

Information for parents, carers and adolescents

What are lidocaine patches?

They are specially 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 patches used for?

When nerves are irritated or become damaged they start to send faulty messages to the brain, which can be felt as pain, numbness or tingling. Pain that is caused by these scrambled or exaggerated messages from nerves is called neuropathic pain (nerve pain). If the nerve pain is in one area, applying a lignocaine patch to the area can help.

How does the patch work?

The patch contains lidocaine (a local anaesthetic). When the patch is applied to the painful area, lidocaine is slowly absorbed into the skin and attaches to the irritated pain nerves in that area. Lidocaine blocks these irritated nerves from sending scrambled/exaggerated messages to the brain.

The patch is also quite padded and can help feel protective for the sensitive skin. Often skin affected by nerve pain is very sensitive to touch, and the patch once applied can help protect the skin. The sticky side of the patch which contains the medicine can feel cool as it is applied. Many patients find the cooling sensation to be pleasant.

How to use the patches

- The patches may be cut into smaller sizes to fit the area affected – do this if needed **before** removing the plastic backing.
- Always apply the patch to clean, intact (unbroken), dry skin as close to the painful area as possible – preferably over the painful area.
- The skin should be free from creams and lotions before applying the patch.
- Press the patch on the skin and hold for approximately 10 seconds to ensure it sticks. Make sure all of it sticks to the skin including the edges.
- When it is first applied it can initially be uncomfortable if the skin is already very sensitive. Once the patch is in place this sensation usually resolves after 1-2 minutes.
- If the patch comes off or becomes unstuck, the same one can be stuck back on. If it does not stick, then a new patch can be applied on the same area. It will need to be taken off at the time the old one would have been removed.
- **Always** wash your hands thoroughly after handling and avoid any eye contact.

The patch can only be worn for a maximum of 12 hours out of a 24 hour day.

If the patch is left on for too long or is applied to broken or inflamed skin, signs of toxicity (too much lidocaine being absorbed into the body) may occur. These include:

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

If any of the above symptoms occur, remove the patch immediately and seek medical help.

Removing the patch

If the patch does not come off easily soak it in warm water for a few minutes. When the patch is removed fold it in half with the sticky sides together and throw it away immediately so that it cannot be accessed by children or pets. Do not flush the patch down the toilet

The patch must remain off for 12 hours before a new one is reapplied.

How many patches can be used?

This depends on how big you are and how large the painful area is. Two, or sometimes three, patches are the maximum you can use at the same time

When should the patches be applied?

The patches are most effective applied when the pain is worst. They can be worn in the day or the night, but we find most people prefer to use them during the day. Try to avoid contact with water whilst wearing the patch (eg bathing, showering or swimming) as the patch will fall off. These can be done whilst the patch is off.

How long will it take for the patch to work?

Nerve pain often escalates or 'winds-up' over time, therefore it often takes some time for the medicine in the patch to work and for the pain nerves to 'un-wind'. Usually you feel some pain relief on the first day you use the patch, however it can take 2-4 weeks using the patch everyday before getting the full benefit. So don't get downhearted if it doesn't work immediately.

What are the possible side effects?

Medicines are used to make you better, but sometimes they cause problems we don't want - these are called side effects. Lidocaine patches have minimal side effects since the majority of the medicine stays localised to the skin where it is applied.

- Skin irritation is the most common side effect
 - This can be a rash, redness, burning sensation, itching or small blisters. If this occurs, remove the patch and do not reapply until the irritation goes away
- Allergic reaction (Khot 2014, Curr med res & opinion)

Contact details Please contact the Pain Service if you have any problems.

Pain office: 0151 252 5003 Anaesthesia office: 0151 252 5223

E mail pain.service@alderhey.nhs.uk . If no one is available to talk to you when you ring, please leave a message on the answerphone and we will get back to you as soon as possible

This leaflet only gives general information. You must always discuss treatment of your child with the appropriate member of staff. Do not rely on this leaflet alone for information about your child's treatment. This information can be made available in other languages and formats if requested.