

# Lidocaine infusions

## Pain Management Patient Information Leaflet

### Introduction

Welcome to The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust pain management service. This leaflet will provide you and your relatives with information about lidocaine infusions. It includes what they are, the benefits and risks and what happens during the procedure.

### What is a lidocaine infusion?

An infusion means that medication is given through a thin, plastic tube called a cannula straight into a vein in your hand or arm. This is called an intravenous infusion (you may know this as a drip).

Lidocaine is a medication that helps reduce pain levels. It is not fully understood how it does this. However, it is thought to alter the balance of chemicals in cells in your body so that pain signals are not transmitted to the brain. This leads to you having reduced pain.

### What are the benefits of lidocaine infusions?

Studies have shown that it helps relieve pain in people who have:

- Pain in several parts of their body that is not being helped by pain-relieving tablets.
- Pain that is so widespread that pain-relieving injections are not a realistic option.

## What are the risks?

All medications have some possible risks and side effects. The risks of having a lidocaine infusion include:

### Frequent risks

- Headache
- Problems with the cannula; it may stop working or become blocked
- Infection or bruising at the cannula site

### Occasional risks

- Low or high blood pressure
- A slow or fast heart rate
- Nausea (feeling sick)
- Tingling around the mouth, ringing in the ears.

### Rare risks

- Collapse
- An irregular heartbeat
- Cardiac arrest (a heart attack) – the heart stops and full resuscitation is needed

## What happens before the infusion?

Before you have your lidocaine infusions, you will need to have blood tests and a recording of your heart rhythm. These are needed so that we make sure there are no reasons why you cannot have the treatment.

We will send you instructions with your appointment letter about not eating and drinking before the infusion. It is safer for you if you have an empty stomach for the procedure.

**If you have a morning appointment** – you must not eat after midnight the night before your appointment. You can have clear fluids, black tea or black coffee until 7am in the morning and then nothing to eat or drink until after your appointment.

**If you have an afternoon appointment** – you can have a light breakfast but you must not eat anything after 7am on the morning of your appointment. You can have clear fluids, black tea or black coffee until 11 am and then nothing to eat or drink until after your appointment.

## How is the infusion carried out?

The procedure takes place in the day case unit and lasts about three hours. Afterwards you can go home. When you arrive at the day case unit, we will complete some paperwork with you. We will explain the treatment to you, and if you are happy to go ahead, you will need to sign a consent form.

A nurse will set up the intravenous infusion (the drip) into your hand or arm. We will connect you to a blood pressure monitor and heart monitor. This is to observe how your body responds to the lidocaine and will help staff identify if you are having any side effects to it. The monitoring will continue for about half an hour after your infusion finishes.

It is a good idea to bring something to pass the time while you are having your infusions. However, please remember to use headphones if you are using personal stereos or radios etc.

## What happens after the infusion?

Once the infusion is finished, we will give you an appointment for your next treatment, if needed.

## What do I need to do when I get home?

It is a good idea to have someone with you for the first 24 hours after your infusion, as you may feel a little weak.

You should gradually increase your level of activity. As you increase your level of activity, **do not** take up new exercise or exercise that you are not used to.

Start simply, by taking two walks a day, but keep it to a distance you know you can manage. **Avoid overdoing it too soon.** Build up by increasing your distance by about 10 per cent every few days. The eventual aim is for you to be able to walk fast enough to make yourself breathless.

If walking is difficult due to other problems, we recommend gentle aerobic exercise. Swimming can be helpful. The temperature of the water makes no difference to the benefits you can get from swimming, so you do not need to worry about this.

If you do not do some form of exercise to improve your general fitness and wellbeing, you may not feel any major benefit from this treatment. Please remember, this treatment only helps reduce your symptoms of pain, it is not a cure for the pain.

## What if I have problems?

You can contact the clinical nurse specialists in the pain management team (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday) by:

- Calling **01384 244735** and leaving a message on the answerphone or
- Ringing the switchboard number 01384 456111 below and asking them to bleep the number 5064

Out of these hours, you will need to contact your GP or NHS 111.

If you have any questions, or if there is anything you do not understand about this leaflet, please contact:

Clinical nurse specialists in pain management on 01384 244735 or ring the switchboard number and ask them to bleep the number 5064 (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)

Russells Hall Hospital switchboard number: 01384 456111

**This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:**

<http://dgft.nhs.uk/services-and-wards/pain-management/>

If you have any feedback on this patient information leaflet, please email [dgft.patient.information@nhs.net](mailto:dgft.patient.information@nhs.net)

**This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 073 0510.**

للحصول على هذه النشرة بحجم أكبر، وعلى شكل إصدار صوتي و بلغات أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال بالرقم 08000730510.

此宣传单可提供大字版本、音频版本和其它语言版本，请拨打电话：0800 073 0510。

Ulotka dostępna jest również w dużym druku, wersji audio lub w innym języku. W tym celu zadzwoń pod numer 0800 073 0510.

ਇਹ ਪਰਚਾ ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ, ਬੋਲ ਕੇ ਰੀਕਾਰਡ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਅਤੇ ਦੂਸਰੀਆਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ, 0800 073 0510 ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜੀ।

Aceasta broșura poate fi pusă la dispoziție tipărită cu caractere mari, versiune audio sau în alte limbi, pentru acest lucru va rugăm sunați la 0800 073 0510.

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