

Lidocaine 5% medicated plaster (Versatis®)

Information for patients

Introduction

Lidocaine 5% medicated plaster (Versatis®) is an adhesive hydrogel plaster containing the local anaesthetic lidocaine. Local anaesthetics work by reducing pain in the skin when applied to the affected area.

Lidocaine 5% medicated plaster is licensed for the local relief of nerve pain that may occur after a previous shingles (herpes zoster) infection. This nerve pain is known as post-herpetic neuralgia (PHN) and is associated with symptoms such as burning, shooting or stabbing type pain.

Over the last five years there has been a large increase in the use of lidocaine 5% medicated plaster (Versatis®). The HSE's Medicines Management Programme (MMP) has reviewed the evidence to support the use of lidocaine 5% medicated plaster. This review, based on national and international clinical evidence, shows that lidocaine 5% medicated plaster can be effective in the treatment of nerve pain associated with previous shingles infection. The evidence to show benefit in other types of pain however, is limited.

What other treatment options are available if lidocaine 5% medicated plaster is not suitable or does not provide sufficient pain relief?

Other treatment options will depend on the type and severity of the pain you are experiencing. It is recommended that you speak to your doctor or pharmacist for the most suitable treatment option.

For nerve pain associated with previous shingles infection, capsaicin 0.075% (Axsain®) cream may be a suitable alternative. This cream can be applied to the area where nerve pain is present 3 to 4 times daily after healing of the shingles virus.

For soft tissue, muscular and/or rheumatic type pain a topical non-steroidal anti-inflammatory (NSAID) gel may be a suitable alternative. An example of a NSAID gel is diclofenac 1% which is available on prescription under the brand names Difene®, Diclac® and Voltarol Emulgel®. Diclofenac 1% gel can be applied to the affected area 2 to 4 times daily for up to 14 days for this type of pain.

If topical treatment is ineffective or does not provide sufficient pain relief, alternative oral therapies may be considered by your doctor. For example, Paracetamol 500mg to 1g every four to six hours and/or an oral NSAID may be suitable oral therapies for the treatment of pain.

What reimbursement changes are being introduced for lidocaine 5% medicated plaster?

New patients

From **1 September 2017** if you are starting treatment with lidocaine 5% medicated plaster, your GP must register your details with the Primary Care Reimbursement Service (PCRS) for lidocaine 5% medicated plaster to be authorised on your medical card or drug payment card.

If you are using lidocaine 5% medicated plaster for the treatment of nerve pain associated with previous shingles infection, treatment will be authorised for one box containing 30 plasters per month for a duration of three months.

If you are using lidocaine 5% medicated plaster for another type of pain your GP will need to outline the reasons for use and the application will be reviewed by the HSE Medicines Management Programme (MMP) before treatment can be authorised.

Existing patients

If you have been receiving lidocaine 5% medicated plaster prior to **1 September 2017**, your GP has three months to register your details with the PCRS. From the date you are registered treatment will be authorised for three months. Please note you will need to be registered by the **30 November 2017** for treatment to be approved on your medical card or drug payment card.

What if I need more than one box (containing 30 plasters) of lidocaine 5% medicated plaster per month?

If you require more than one box containing 30 plasters per month, your GP can apply for additional quantities through the online application system stating the reasons for the extra allowance request.

What if I need treatment with lidocaine 5% medicated plaster for longer than three months?

If you need require treatment with lidocaine 5% medicated plaster for longer than three months' your GP can renew your application to authorise a further three months' supply.

Where can I get more information about lidocaine 5% medicated plaster?

You can find more information on lidocaine 5% medicated plaster on the HSE's Medicine Management Programme website at www.hse.ie/yourmedicines.

What is the appeals process for lidocaine 5% medicated plaster?

An appeals process is in place if necessary following a negative reimbursement decision from the online application process. Appeals can be sent directly to the MMP at mmp@hse.ie or by post to Prof Michael Barry (Clinical Lead, MMP), Department of Pharmacology and Therapeutics, Trinity Centre for Health Sciences, St. James's Hospital, Dublin 8. Appeals must be made by the patient's physician and should include any additional information to support the unmet clinical need for lidocaine 5% medicated plaster based on failure of other treatment options. Appeals are reviewed on a case-by-case basis reviewing the information provided in the initial online application and the information in the appeal submission to the MMP. A letter outlining the final reimbursement decision is communicated back to the physician.