



Lidocaine 5% medicated plaster (Versatis®) reimbursement

Questions and Answers for Healthcare Professionals

1) What is lidocaine 5% medicated plaster and what is it used for?

Lidocaine 5% medicated plaster is an adhesive hydrogel plaster containing the local anaesthetic lidocaine. It is indicated for the local relief of nerve pain that may occur after a previous herpes zoster (shingles) infection. Localised symptoms such as burning, shooting or stabbing pain are associated with this type of nerve pain.

2) How should lidocaine 5% medicated plaster (Versatis®) be used?

After the healing of shingles, the plaster should be applied to the painful area once daily for up to 12 hours within a 24 hour period. The minimum number of plasters that provides effective pain relief should be used. The lidocaine 5% medicated plaster may be cut to size with scissors before removing from the liner to fit the affected area.

3) Why is the HSE introducing changes to the reimbursement of lidocaine 5% medicated plaster (Versatis®)?

The Medicines Management Programmes (MMP) has reviewed the evidence supporting the use of Lidocaine 5% medicated plaster (available on www.hse.ie/yourmedicines). This report highlighted that the clinical evidence to support the use of lidocaine 5% medicated plaster for PHN is limited due to lack of comparative data and short follow-up periods and its value is uncertain for all other types of pain.

Also, recent prescribing database analysis suggests the annual expenditure under the Community Drugs Schemes (CDS) exceeded **€30 million per annum** with over 25,000 in receipt of this medicine in 2016.

The new changes are aligned with best practice recommendations to ensure appropriate use of this product for the licensed indication.



4) How will patients be deemed eligible for reimbursement under this initiative?

Reimbursement will be approved based on information provided by the patients' general practitioner (GP) in relation to the indication for treatment. Approval will be granted for 3 months for treatment of patients with a diagnosis of PHN. If reimbursement is sought for an unlicensed indication this information can also be provided through the online application (Exceptional Circumstances).

When registered under PHN, approval is real-time and the patient will be approved for three months of reimbursement support.

Where the application is under Exceptional Circumstances, the application will be reviewed by the Medicines Management Programme (MMP) before a decision is made and communicated through the GP Application Suite to the GP. Approval status can also be checked by the pharmacy on the Pharmacy Application Suite (outlined in question 6).

5) How will prescribers submit this information?

This information can be submitted by the patients' GP through the **GP Application Suite** under 'Special Drug Request'.

6) How will GPs and Pharmacists review eligibility status?

Eligibility can be confirmed and monitored through the GP Application Suite and the Pharmacy Application Suite by following the steps below on www.PCRS.ie

Access for GPs

Online services > Services for General Practitioners only > GP Application Suite > Eligibility Confirmation

Access for Pharmacists

Online services > Services for Pharmacists only > Pharmacy Application Suite > Eligibility Confirmation



7) If a patient under my care is approved for reimbursement, how long can they receive treatment for?

Reimbursement approval will currently be granted for three months and if treatment is required to continue a further update of the application will be required.

8) When will changes to reimbursement of lidocaine 5% medicated plaster (Versatis®) come into effect?

The changes to reimbursement are effective for all newly initiated patients from 1 September 2017. For existing patients already on treatment the prescriber has 3 months in which to complete the application for continued reimbursement (for three months). After this time, no further reimbursement will be allowed without completion of the online approval process.

9) How will claims for lidocaine 5% medicated plaster (Versatis®) be processed?

Pharmacies can dispense and claim for lidocaine 5% medicated plaster (Versatis®) for approved patients electronically using the product GMS code, submitting in the normal manner with monthly claims.

Claims submitted for patients who are not approved will not be paid.

10) What should I do if a recipient requires more than one box (containing 30 plasters) of lidocaine 5% medicated plaster (Versatis®)?

If patients have a requirement for more plasters due to particular circumstances (exceptional arrangements) their GP may submit this information on the online application to the PCRS stating the reasons for the extra allowance request.

11) What alternative treatment(s) are available for non-PHN pain?

Alternative treatment(s) will depend on the type of pain. The use of oral analgesics may be suitable (e.g. paracetamol and/or non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug [NSAID]). For soft tissue, muscular and/or rheumatic type pain a topical NSAID gel (e.g. diclofenac 1%) may be a suitable alternative.