

LIDOCAINE PATCHES

DRUG NAME

Generic: Lidocaine

Class of drug: Anaesthetic

Brands in Australia: Nervoderm, Versatis

DOSAGE FORM

Available as a 5% patch.

HOW IT WORKS

Lidocaine is a local anaesthetic. It blocks sodium channels in nerves under the skin. This reduces the ability of nerves to send pain signals to the brain. Works locally, with very little absorption into the bloodstream.

Onset of action

- Pain relief usually starts within 30 minutes to a few hours of application.
- Effect lasts for the duration the patch is worn (up to 12 hours).

For herpetic neuralgia, it may take 2 weeks to see if you are a responder.

DOSAGE & FREQUENCY

Your doctor will advise on the starting dose and guide the dose changes.

- start with _____
- if tolerated, increase to _____ after _____ days
- if necessary, increase by _____ every _____ week(s)
- if successive increases are well tolerated *and bring additional benefit*, continue to titrate up to a maximum of _____
- to be reviewed by your doctor on _____

ROUTE OF ADMINISTRATION

Applied to intact, unbroken skin over the painful area.

WHAT ELSE SHOULD I KNOW WHILE TAKING THIS MEDICATION

- Apply to dry, non-irritated skin in the painful area (for shingles, use patches after the rash has healed); patches may be cut to fit area. Cut, rather than shave, hair at application site if necessary. Wash hands after application.
- While wearing the patches, do not allow them to come in contact with water or any heat source (e.g. heat pads, electric blankets).
- Wear patches for up to 12 out of every 24 hours; consider choosing the time when pain is most troublesome, ensuring bathing/showering occurs during the patch-free interval. 12 hour off period is to reduce risk of skin reactions, but this may still occur in 15% of patients.
- Ensure you and/or your carer read and understand the Consumer Medicine Information and make sure you know how to dispose of patches safely.

STORAGE INSTRUCTIONS

Store below 25°C in the original sealed pouch until use. Keep out of reach of children.

DISPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS

Used patches still contain active ingredient, which may be harmful to others. Fold the used patch in half, with the sticky sides together and throw them away so that they are out of the reach of children.

Return unused or expired patches to your pharmacy for safe disposal.

MISSED DOSE INSTRUCTIONS

Ask your doctor or pharmacist.

EMERGENCY INSTRUCTIONS

Seek urgent medical help if you:

- Use too many patches or wear them too long (symptoms: dizziness, irregular heartbeat, seizures, confusion).
- Develop a severe allergic reaction (rash, swelling, breathing problems).

COMMON SIDE EFFECTS

- Skin redness or irritation at patch site
- Mild itching or rash
- Numbness at application site

SERIOUS SIDE EFFECTS

- Severe skin reaction (blistering, burning, severe rash)
- Allergic reaction with swelling or difficulty breathing
- Systemic effects (rare, but may include dizziness, confusion, seizures, irregular heartbeat if absorbed in large amounts)

MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR SIDE EFFECTS

- Skin irritation: Apply to a different site each day; use moisturiser after removal.
- Mild redness/itching: Often improves with continued use; if severe, consult your doctor.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Interactions:

- Low risk as lidocaine mainly acts locally.
- Caution if also using other local anaesthetics or anti-arrhythmic drugs.

Precautions:

- Use with caution if you have severe liver disease.
- Not recommended on broken skin.
- Generally safe in older adults as systemic absorption is minimal.

Elective surgery advice

- Usually stopped on the day of surgery, as the patch will be removed before theatre.
- Inform your surgeon and anaesthetist that you are using lidocaine patches.
- Can usually be restarted after surgery once cleared by your doctor.