

# Intravenous lidocaine infusion



## **Who is this leaflet for?**

This leaflet is for patients attending the Pain Department. It provides information on treating pain with intravenous lidocaine infusions. It explains what is involved, the possible benefits and side effects.

## **What is a lidocaine infusion?**

Lidocaine is a local anaesthetic drug, which affects the sensitivity of your nerves. You may be familiar with such drugs from local anaesthetics for dental treatment or nerve blocks.

Lidocaine infusion involves giving the drug directly into your blood stream.

Its use as an infusion is a quite recent development, but the long term safety of lidocaine is well established.

## **Is it suitable for everyone?**

To assure your safe treatment, tell your doctor if you suffer from any serious health conditions (such as heart or liver problems) or if you may be pregnant.

## **How do I prepare for it?**

You will have an initial treatment to establish what effect the drug has on your pain. If you have no pain or your pain level is low, please contact the Pain Clinic before arriving for your appointment to establish whether the procedure is still required.

Before your first treatment, you will be given the chance to discuss the treatment in more detail and be asked to sign a consent form.

It is advisable to avoid a large meal within 3 hours before the infusion.

## **What does it involve?**

1. A cannula (small plastic tube) is placed in your vein (usually in your hand or arm) and you will be attached to a heart and blood pressure monitor.
2. The lidocaine will be given to you over a period of 1-2 hours. Staff will check you frequently for possible side effects.

3. Your blood pressure and pain score (0-10) will be checked every 15 minutes for the duration of the treatment (unless you feel unwell) and for 30 minutes after the treatment is completed.

## **What are the possible side effects?**

Mild side effects include:

- feeling drowsy
- change in hearing (such as ringing in your ears)
- a tingling feeling, usually in your face.

Any side effects usually wear off quickly without any problem, but during treatment they may also be warning signs of more severe problems. Severe but rare complications include fitting or collapse. You must tell us if you are feeling in any way unwell during the treatment, so we can consider stopping the treatment.

Very occasionally, the mild side effects may persist for a day or two. For this reason we strongly advise that someone accompanies you home and remains with you for 12 hours after treatment, especially after your first treatment.

## **How will I know whether the treatment is effective?**

We will give you a pain diary to complete after your first infusion (or first course of infusions). This will help us assess the effect of the lidocaine infusion on your pain. The first beneficial effect patients usually experience is improvement in their sleep pattern, followed by a decrease in general pain and tenderness.

- Effectiveness of the treatment varies from patient to patient.
- You will be booked for one treatment in the first instance. If this proves beneficial and is well tolerated you will be given a course of two further infusions.

## **What if I have any problems?**

Your first point of contact will be your own GP, especially if the problem occurs outside normal clinic hours. To contact the Pain Clinic during normal working hours, please phone our secretaries on: 01872 252792.

If you would like this leaflet in large print, braille, audio version or in another language, please contact the General Office on 01872 252690

