

# Lidocaine infusion

## Other formats

If you need this information in another format such as audio CD, Braille, large print, high contrast, British Sign Language or translated into another language, please contact the PALS desk on 01271 314090 or at [rduh.pals-northern@nhs.net](mailto:rduh.pals-northern@nhs.net).

## What is a Lidocaine Infusion and why have I been offered one?

Lidocaine is a local anaesthetic drug that can be used to reduce neuropathic pain that does not respond to other treatments. It affects nerve conduction and the spread of pain signals in nerve fibres. In other words it quietens the misbehaving nerves, thereby reducing the pain. Lidocaine is given off-licence, meaning it is usually used for other treatment but can be used for pain management.

## What will happen on the day?

You will receive an appointment letter asking you to attend day clinic at North Devon District Hospital (NDDH).

Please take any normal medications, including regular pain medicines. You may eat and drink as normal prior to the infusion.

You will meet a specialist nurse from the pain team who will take you to a treatment room and explain the procedure and answer any questions you may have. If space allows, you may have a friend or relative stay with you for the procedure. Please ask your nurse on the day.

You will have your weight recorded as Lidocaine is prescribed according to weight.

You will have an intravenous cannula placed in your arm and you will be connected to monitoring equipment in order to observe your pulse, blood pressure, heart rate and oxygen saturations. These observations will be recorded every 5 to 10 minutes throughout your infusion by a qualified pain specialist nurse.

The infusion will be commenced while you are resting on a couch. Your first infusion will run over 2 hours. Subsequent ones run over 1 hour. You will be offered refreshments at this time, but please feel free to bring in your own if you prefer.

Once fully recovered, you will be allowed home with a responsible adult who must stay with you for 12 hours. You are not allowed to drive for 24 hours following Lidocaine infusion.

The treatment works over many days so you will not always know how effective it has been on the day. You will be followed up with a telephone appointment from a pain specialist nurse to assess how beneficial the treatment has been and if you want it repeating.

We offer three infusions in succession up to 3 months apart. We will then review whether ongoing infusions are required and may refer you back to your pain consultant for review.

Unfortunately we cannot guarantee you will benefit from this particular treatment. Alternative treatments will be discussed as your follow up if no benefit is gained.

## What are the risks and side effects of a Lidocaine infusion?

Fortunately serious side effects or complications are very rare.

However, even at the recommended dose, side effects can occur.

Common side effects include dizziness or light-headedness, bruising to the cannula site and nausea.

Less common side effects include drowsiness, tingling or numbness around your mouth, metallic taste, allergy and irregular heart rate.

Very uncommonly in extremely rare circumstances, Lidocaine toxicity at high doses can result in increased risk of cardiac arrhythmias which if unaddressed could lead to cardiac arrest or convulsions. However, this has not been reported when using Lidocaine in small, well controlled doses for Lidocaine infusions.

## Important information

It is very important for you to tell us if:

- you have had recent heart, liver or kidney problems, irregular heartbeats, abnormal ECG, seizure disorders or reactions to local anaesthetic.
- you are pregnant.
- you have an infection and are on medication.
- you are taking any blood thinning medication such as Aspirin, Warfarin, Dabigatran or Rivaroxaban.

## Further information

If you have any questions, please contact the pain management secretaries, who will take note of your query, and if not able to assist at that time, will take your telephone number and ask the pain specialist nurses to call you back.

(Please note: some pain nurses work on a part time basis, so you may not always have a phone call the same day).

**Pain management secretary office**  
**Tel: 01271 337820 (Monday – Friday, 8am – 3:30pm)**

## **PALS**

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern call 01271 314090 or email [rduh.pals-northern@nhs.net](mailto:rduh.pals-northern@nhs.net). You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple.

## **Have your say**

Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust aims to provide high quality services. However, please tell us when something could be improved. If you have a comment or compliment about a service or treatment, please raise your comments with a member of staff or the PALS team in the first instance.

Tell us about your experience of our services. Share your feedback on the Care Opinion website [www.careopinion.org.uk](http://www.careopinion.org.uk).

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