

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 (Versatis®) 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 (Versatis®). This review, based on national and international clinical evidence, shows that lidocaine 5% medicated plaster (Versatis®) 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 (Versatis®) 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 changes have been introduced to the reimbursement of lidocaine 5% medicated plaster (Versatis®)?

New changes to the reimbursement of lidocaine 5% medicated plaster (Versatis®) came into effect on **1 September 2017** for new patients and from **1 December 2017** for established patients on lidocaine 5% medicated plaster (Versatis®) prior to September 2017.

- **Reimbursement for Post-herpetic Neuralgia (PHN)**

If you are using lidocaine 5% medicated plaster (Versatis®) for the treatment of nerve pain associated with previous shingles infection, your doctor must register your details with the Primary Care Reimbursement Service (PCRS) for lidocaine 5% medicated plaster (Versatis®) to be authorised on your medical card or drug payment card.

- **Reimbursement for indications other than Post-herpetic Neuralgia (PHN)**

If you are using lidocaine 5% medicated plaster (Versatis®) for another type of neuropathic pain your doctor must register your details with the Primary Care Reimbursement Service (PCRS) and they will need to outline certain criteria for its use. Your application will be reviewed by the HSE Medicines Management Programme (MMP) before treatment can be authorised.

How long will I be entitled to receive treatment once reimbursement is authorised?

Once reimbursement is authorised, there is no limit on the duration of treatment.

Where can I get more information about lidocaine 5% medicated plaster (Versatis®)?

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

What is the appeals process for lidocaine 5% medicated plaster (Versatis®)?

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 clinician 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 clinician.