NHS
Hertfordshire and West Essex
Integrated Care Board

Lidocaine Plasters – Information for Patients

NHS guidance states that some medicines should not routinely be prescribed. This is because the medicines are:

• Not as safe as other medicines OR
• Not as good (effective) as other medicines OR
• More expensive than other medicines that do the same thing.

One of these medicines is lidocaine plasters.

This document will explain why the changes are happening and where you can get more information and support.

What are lidocaine plasters used for?

Lidocaine plasters are applied to the skin and are used for the relief of nerve pain, which can happen after a shingles infection in adults. Lidocaine plasters are sometimes used for other types of pain relief.

Why does the NHS want to reduce prescribing of lidocaine plasters?

There is very little evidence that lidocaine plasters work for nerve pain, especially compared to other treatments. They are also very expensive compared to other pain treatments and are not good value for money. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) does not make a recommendation about lidocaine plasters for treating nerve pain because there is not enough evidence to do so. There is no good evidence that they work for other types of pain.

What options are available instead of lidocaine plasters?

If you are already receiving lidocaine plasters on prescription your GP Practice prescriber or specialist will review your treatment. You can talk to your them about the options available so that you can come to a joint decision about what the best option will be to relieve your
pain. You can talk to your prescriber about other things you can do to help manage your pain such as massage, ice or heat therapy, or gentle exercise.

What do I do if my medicine has been changed and it's causing me problems?

If you have problems with your new painkillers, you can speak to your prescriber.

Where can I find more information and support?

- You can speak to your local pharmacist, GP practice team or the person who prescribed the medication to you
- National and local charities can offer advice and support, for example:
  - Pain Concern: http://painconcern.org.uk/ or call 0300 123 0789
  - Pain UK: https://painuk.org

- The NICE information for patients can be found at: www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg173/ifp/chapter/About-this-information

- The Patients Association can also offer support and advice: www.patients-association.org.uk/ or call 0800 345 7115

Find out more about the medicines that are being stopped or reduced: https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/items-which-should-not-routinely-be-prescribed-in-primary-care-policy-guidance/