



PAINWEST

Excellence in Pain Management

Therapeutic infusion - Lignocaine

What is Lignocaine?

Lignocaine (also known as lidocaine) is a commonly used local anaesthetic (numbing) medication. It is usually injected next to a nerve causes them to temporarily stop working. It also has an effect on the nerves in the heart, and has been used in the past to treat life-threatening heart attacks (arrhythmia).

Lignocaine can also be given directly into your bloodstream and can have a more generalised pain relieving action. It is now common for people to receive intravenous Lignocaine during or after certain surgery, or as a part of their postoperative pain relief.

Why is Lignocaine used as an infusion for pain management?

For difficult-to-treat pain issues, where at least a part of the pain may be coming from the nerves, spinal cord or the brain (neuropathic pain), bursts of intermittent Lignocaine infusion intravenously (through the drip) may have a lasting pain relieving effect. It can also give you a “window of opportunity” to improve your function.

What do I need to know about Lignocaine infusion?

1. Lignocaine infusions are relatively safe but can cause temporary sedation, blurred vision or slowed speech. Allergic reactions are rare. Lignocaine is not known to be an addictive medication.
2. Lignocaine can potentially slow your heart rate, reduce your blood pressure, and cause seizures, although such effects are only seen at very high doses. We will monitor these throughout infusion to keep you safe. If you have a significant cardiac condition or epilepsy then a Lignocaine infusion may not be suitable for you. Please discuss this with your doctor.

What can I expect?

Before the infusion, it is safest for you to come on an empty stomach. We will ask you to not eat or drink from midnight the night before infusion, with the exception of usual medications. Lignocaine generally does not interact with other medications and they can be taken with a small sip of water.

On the day, you will present to the private hospital for a short day admission. We will keep you comfortable in bed, and monitor your oxygen level, blood pressure and heart rate. We may give you extra oxygen through a mask. We will run an infusion of Lignocaine by itself, or combined with another medication, over the period of 2-3 hours. The rate at which the infusion is run can be changed depending on your reaction (e.g. it can be slowed down if you are having a strong reaction).

Once the infusion finishes, we may monitor you for slightly longer before allowing you to return home. As Lignocaine has an effect on your brain, you cannot drive, operate heavy machinery, make important decisions or sign legal documents for 24 hours.

Lignocaine infusion is often given in a burst (e.g. every two weeks for 2-4 times in a row) for maximal effect. Given this way, we may expect pain relief lasting for weeks to several months. You may not feel an effect immediately, and it can often take several infusions for the effect to become noticeable.

Please ask us if you have any questions or concerns about this treatment. We are here to help!

