This handout will help you learn more about Lidocaine infusion treatments: what to expect, how to get ready, and what to watch for when you get home.

**When and where will the infusion be done?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of procedure:</th>
<th>VIHA Pain Program – RJH Site</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Homer 2, Memorial Pavilion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time of procedure:</td>
<td>Royal Jubilee Hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1952 Bay Street</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PLEASE ARRIVE 30 MINUTES BEFORE PROCEDURE**

VIHA Pain Program Web site: [www.viha.ca/pain_program](http://www.viha.ca/pain_program)

If you need to cancel, please contact the Pain Program **at least 48 hours** before your procedure.

**What is Lidocaine?**

Lidocaine is a local anaesthetic. It is like the medication a dentist uses to numb your teeth. Lidocaine can be given into a vein (IV infusion) or under the skin (subcutaneous infusion). Lidocaine is not safe for people who are allergic to local anaesthetics ending in “caine” or who are taking dihydroergotamine (DHE). Lidocaine must be used with caution in people with certain heart conditions or blood pressure problems. If you have any of these allergies or conditions, be sure to tell the Pain Program doctor or nurse.

**Why is a Lidocaine Infusion done?**

Lidocaine infusion can be used to treat nerve pain syndromes when the usual pain medications and methods have not worked. Your Pain Program doctor will talk with you about the use of Lidocaine infusion to treat your pain. If it is determined that you might benefit from this treatment, you will be given an IV Lidocaine “trial treatment” done at the Pain Program first. If your response is good, a second trial infusion at a higher dose may be given. If successful, Lidocaine will be given as a subcutaneous infusion every 1-3 weeks depending on the response.

**Who will do the infusion?**

A Pain Program registered nurse will give you the Lidocaine infusion.
Are there any side effects with this procedure?

Tell your nurse right away if you have any of the following side effects during your infusion.

Common side effects include:

- Tiredness
- Headache
- Dizziness
- Nausea
- Feeling “intoxicated”
- Slurred speech
- Redness or soreness at the infusion site
- Tremors
- Numbness and tingling around the mouth, arms, or legs

Rare side effects/risks include:

- Sudden, severe difficulty breathing
- Irregular heart rhythms
- Seizures
- Loss of consciousness
- Confusion
- Death

How do I get ready for the Infusion?

- Please review pamphlet: “Simple Steps for a Safe Outpatient Visit”.
- Before your first dose, you must have a 12-lead ECG, a test that checks how your heart is functioning.
- Eat your regular meals and take your usual medications before the procedure.
- Wear loose-fitting clothing (so that your pump can be placed comfortably on your arm or stomach) and low heeled, non-slip shoes.
- Avoid wearing scented products such as perfume or aftershave.
- Arrange for a responsible person to drive you home after your test dose(s) and take it easy that day, because you may feel sleepy the first time you receive a Lidocaine infusion.
- Make sure you have access to a phone when you get home after the procedure. This is so you can contact the hospital Emergency Room or 911 in case you have a reaction to the treatment.
How is the procedure done?

If you are having an IV “trial treatment”:
You will have an IV started. You will be connected to a blood pressure cuff, heart monitor, and oxygen monitor. The IV infusion is given over a short period of time, usually about 30-40 minutes.

If you are having a subcutaneous infusion:

- You will have a small plastic tube (cannula) inserted under your skin. It will be placed in an area of your body that will be most comfortable for you. The diagram shows you the possible areas to use.
- The cannula will be attached to a small disposable pump. The Baxter Infusor, also called a Baxter pump, is a lightweight disposable device containing your Lidocaine prescription. The pump is used to deliver a slow, continuous infusion just below your skin over several hours. (There are different sizes of pump depending on the amount of medication in your prescription.)
- When filled with medication, the balloon deflates slowly and pushes the medication up through the tubing at a fixed rate. As this happens, the balloon gradually becomes smaller, and moves down the infusion scale.
- No batteries are needed. The benefit of this system is that it allows you to have your infusion at home rather than in the hospital. You can carry the pump in the sleeve provided or in a carrier of your choice.
- If you have any side effects at home during the infusion, clamp the tubing to stop the infusion. Wait 15 minutes for the symptoms to pass, then unclamp the tubing and start again. If the symptoms return, clamp the tubing, remove the catheter (see below), and let the Pain Program know about your symptoms. Return the empty pump to the clinic for disposal on your next visit if the infusion was not completed and medication remains. If symptoms continue even after the infusion has stopped, call the hospital Emergency Room or 911.
- When the infusion is complete, wash your hands well; remove the tape and dressing, and pull the cannula out with the pump still attached. You may dispose of it in your household trash.
- You may place a bandaid over the infusion site or leave it open to the air. You may notice a slight puffiness at the site. It will go away in a couple of hours.
Your response to treatment will be measured in several ways:

1. **Pain Scale:** You will be asked to rate your pain on a scale of 0 to 10.

2. **Function:** You will be asked about improvements in your ability to do things such as: bathing, grooming, going to the bathroom, cooking, cleaning, shopping, or gardening.

3. **Activity:** You will be asked about improvements in your ability to do activities that were hard for you to do before the infusion.

4. **Pain Diary:** You will be asked to keep a pain diary to help you record your response to the treatment.

---

**Care at home**

- Resume your regular diet. Be sure to drink plenty of fluids.
- You may resume your regular activities but should take it easy for a day or two. Do not do anything strenuous for at least 24 hours.
- Apply ice or a cold pack over the injection site if it is painful. Put it on and off for about 15 minutes each time.

---

**Frequently Asked Questions**

- **Are small air bubbles in the tubing harmful?** No, they can be ignored.
- **What do I do if the fluid does not move?** If the fluid has not moved after 15 minutes, your infusor is faulty. This is rare, but may happen. If it does, contact the Pain Clinic to let them know you will need a replacement. Return the unused infusor with medication in it to the Pain Clinic when you pick up your new one. We will dispose of the medication safely.
- **What are my choices for injection sites?** The subcutaneous tissue is the fatty tissue located just below the skin, and the amount of this tissue varies from person to person. There are a number of subcutaneous infusion sites on the body to choose from (see diagram above). The abdomen is a good site to use; we just avoid the area right around the belly button.

---

Call your family doctor or the Pain Program staff if you have any side effects or unusual or new symptoms. If they are not available, go to the nearest Emergency Department.

The information in this handout is intended only for the person it was given to by the health care team. It does not replace the advice or directions given to you by your doctor.