Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Capsaicin 8% Patch Application

Version number: **5**
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Patient Information

Chronic Pain Service

The Patient Information Leaflets page on the Trust website is available on the link: https://www.wwl.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets or scan the QR code.



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- Leaflet title: Capsaicin 8% Patch Application
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What is Capsaicin 8% Patch (Qutenza®)?

Capsaicin 8% patch is a patch applied to your skin on an area where you are experiencing localised pain. The patch contains a synthetic form of capsaicin which is the compound that gives chilli peppers their heat sensation. The capsaicin acts on the pain-sensing nerves in the skin and desensitises these nerves. The effects of the patch are expected to last many weeks (on average three months or longer). Some patients have also reported a reduction in the size of the painful area.

Why are you having this patch applied?

Sometimes when there is damage to the nerves which pick up sensations of touch, temperature or pain, inappropriate messages are sent to the brain. The symptoms are often described as ‘burning’, ‘stabbing’, ‘electric-shock’ in nature. The 8% Capsaicin patch is applied to reduce this activity.

Why does the patch have to be applied by my healthcare professional?

It must be applied by a healthcare professional that is familiar with Qutenza® patch administration (i.e. handling it with special gloves, and safe disposal to prevent accidental contact).

The healthcare professional will measure your blood pressure prior to, during and after your Qutenza® treatment as Qutenza® treatment may increase blood pressure.

What should I discuss with my healthcare professional before using the treatment?

The healthcare professional will complete your documentation and consent form. Please inform staff if you:

- Have high or unstable blood pressure
- Have recently had any heart problems or a stroke
- Are pregnant or breastfeeding

How is the treatment performed?

The healthcare professional will outline the painful area and mark your skin with a skin marker/pen. Any long hair in the area will be clipped with scissors (not shaved).

The 8% Capsaicin patch is cut to the shape of the painful area and applied to the skin. Bandages may be placed on top of the patch to keep it firmly intact with your skin. The duration of treatment will be 30 to 60 minutes depending on the area being treated. (This will be discussed with you).

During the treatment, it is common to experience mild discomfort, a burning or stinging sensation. Cooling techniques will be used with or without oral analgesia. The patch is carefully removed before cleaning gel is applied for 1 minute and then also removed. The treatment area is washed gently with soap and water and a cooled pack applied if required.

Is there pain during the treatment?

Some temporary discomfort during the treatment is common on the day of treatment. Occasionally the pain can be dramatically worse for a few days. Despite this, there are some patients who are quite prepared to tolerate this period of discomfort because of the subsequent prolonged period of pain relief they can experience. Cooling packs may be provided as needed and/or pain medicine given to reduce discomfort.

What are the benefits of this treatment?

No pain treatments are guaranteed to work. The capsaicin 8% patch is designed to provide prolonged pain relief for people who have localised pain due to nerve damage to the skin.

The benefits may be obvious on the day of treatment. However, it may take 14 days before you feel the maximum benefit. The duration of this pain relief may also vary with evidence of 3 months' relief or longer being reported.

What are the side effects of this treatment?

It is usual for the skin to sting or become red and have a burning sensation for a short duration while the patch is in place and after treatment.

Your blood pressure may increase because of the temporary reaction to the 8% Capsaicin patch. Other side effects include itching, blistering, swelling, dryness, prickling sensation, and inflammation of the skin. These will wear off over the first 7 days. If any of these side effects become severe; or if you experience other side effects, please contact us on the number below.

The areas treated may become sensitive to heat, so you may wish to avoid hot showers, hot baths, direct sunlight, and exercising for a few days following treatment. A post-treatment advice sheet will be provided.

How often can I have this treatment?

Treatment may be repeated only after 3 months. This will be assessed by your healthcare professionals.

Alternatives

Your pain specialist will have discussed alternatives with you in your consultation. These could be medicines, different injections, or physical therapies. Each patient is unique and specific alternatives cannot be given on a general information leaflet.

Contact information

If you have any questions, please contact the pain management team on telephone: **01942 773099**

Important Information

It is very important that you attend any appointments made for you with either, the Doctor; Nurse; Physiotherapist; Occupational therapist or the Psychologist. If you cannot attend, please cancel the appointment, and re-arrange, failure to cancel will result in discharge from the pain service and you will need to be re-referred by your GP if you wish to be seen again.



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