Service: Pain Clinic

Qutenza (Capsaicin) 8% patch
Pain is transmitted by nerves so it is often possible to reduce pain by blocking signals from affected nerves.

What is Qutenza?

Qutenza is indicated for the management of neuropathic pain. It is a patch for use on your skin. Qutenza contains a synthetic form of capsaicin, which is the compound that gives chilli peppers their heat sensation. The capsaicin acts on pain sensing nerves in the skin, making them less sensitive to pain.

Who may the treatment help?

Peripheral nerve pain is a particular type of pain caused by damage to the peripheral nervous system. This is a network of nerves that transmit information between the brain and other parts of the body. When these nerves become damaged, they sometimes send confused messages to the brain. This may result in pain that can be described as stabbing, burning, shooting, aching or like an electric shock. Peripheral nerve pain can be caused by diseases such as shingles, injury or medical procedures.

How is the procedure done?

The procedure will take place in the Pain Clinic in a nurse-led clinic. A healthcare professional will mark the most sensitive area of your skin with a marker pen. Please ensure the area to be treated is clean. Any hair in the area will be clipped with scissors or you may wish to remove any hair yourself.
hours before the treatment as any broken skin will prevent the treatment from taking place.

The patch will be cut to fit the treatment area and this will then be placed on the skin. A bandage or dressing will be applied on top of the patch to prevent it from moving or touching any other non-sensitive skin. The patch is then left in place for 60 minutes or if the feet are being treated, 30 minutes.

After the appropriate time the healthcare professional will carefully remove the patch and will apply a cleansing gel to the skin which will be left for approximately one minute before being wiped off. The area will then be washed with soapy water. You will be allowed to go home shortly after the procedure.

It is advised to bring an item of clothing to cover the treated area that could be worn for the 48 hours post-treatment.

Please take your usual pain killers prior to treatment and bring them with you in case required.

You are advised **NOT** to drive on the day of treatment. You may eat and drink as normal.

If you experience pain or burning during the treatment you may be provided with cooling aids.

**What are the benefits?**

Qutenza is designed to provide prolonged pain relief from peripheral nerve pain. You may start to feel some pain relief on the day the patch is applied; however this could take up to 14 days before you feel the maximum benefit. Relief, if
obtained, can last up to six months or more, but some may only benefit for a short time.

**What are the side effects?**

It is usual for the skin to become red and burn for a while during and after the treatment. 1:10 patients may suffer application site pain. Due to this your blood pressure may go up because of the temporary reaction. This will be monitored throughout. Other side effects, which are uncommon, may include:

- Itching
- Blisters
- Bumps
- Swelling
- Dryness
- Bruising

These side effects are normal and wear off over the first 7 days. If any of these side effects become severe please contact the pain clinic or GP for advice.

**Precautions and advice**

You will need to be in the pain clinic for about 2 hours. Please bring something to read or some music to listen to with you. We will provide you with a drink and you should eat and drink as normal.
You will be able to go home soon after the procedure and you will be advised not to drive.

If the treated area is painful, burning or stinging, apply cold compresses to the affected area. You can take your regular painkillers as needed.

The treated area may be sensitive to heat, hot water, direct sunlight or vigorous exercise for the first few days following treatment.

It is not advisable to shower or wash the affected area for 48 hours post application as this can contribute to the effectiveness of treatment.

You will be given a 6 week telephone appointment follow up call before you leave the clinic. You will be given a letter to give to your GP about your treatment.

Please tell your consultant/nurse before your treatment if:-

- You are allergic to any medications.
- You have an infection at the treatment site.
- You may be pregnant.
- You have had a recent heart attack or have unstable high blood pressure.
References and further information

www.qutenza.co.uk

www.evidence.nhs.uk/formulary/bnf/current/10/qutenza

NICE - www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg173/documents/
neuropathic-pain-pharmacologic

www.astellas.co.uk
If you or the individual you are caring for need support reading this leaflet please ask a member of staff for advice.

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