

## **Patient Information - Lidocaine Infusion**

Your doctor has prescribed lidocaine to treat your pain. Lidocaine is a local anaesthetic similar to the anesthetic dentists use to numb your tooth. It seems to work by quieting nerves, which are firing when they should not be, thereby reducing your pain.

Lidocaine belongs to an entirely different family from morphine like drugs and can be effective at reducing certain kinds of pain. Lidocaine is administered directly in the vein by a portable pump. The pump delivers this medication as a continuous infusion, delivering the calculated amount over about 30 minutes

### **Side Effects of Lidocaine**

Lidocaine is a relatively safe drug when given in this dose. However, even at low doses, certain side effects can occur. The most serious, but rare, side effect is an allergic reaction to the medication, which can produce sudden, severe difficulty in breathing. The allergic reaction also can increase the chances of having an irregular heartbeat, which, in rare cases, can lead to sudden death. Although allergic reactions to lidocaine are serious, they are fortunately very rare.

The most common side effects you might experience are usually related to having too much of the drug in your body. When this happens, you may experience numbness around your mouth, dizziness, or even a sense of being drunk, perhaps with slurring of speech.

You also may experience hallucinations, muscle twitches, or even a sense of being detached from your body. Though these side effects go away very quickly, once the infusion is stopped or lowered and blood levels of lidocaine drop, they should prompt a call to your nurse.

In rare cases, lidocaine can produce seizures, usually when the dose being given is too high. In these cases, the infusion should be stopped, the nurse called, and seizure medication given.