

Qutenza[®] treatment

Introduction

Your doctor has prescribed Qutenza[®] to treat your nerve (neuropathic) pain. Nerve pain is often described as burning, stabbing and aching or like an electric shock. This type of pain usually has no clear cause. The pain may be due to shingles, diabetic neuropathy or damage to your nerves following an accident, injury or surgery.

This leaflet gives you information about Qutenza[®] treatment and answers some of the commonly asked questions.

What is Qutenza[®] treatment?

Qutenza[®] is a skin patch used to ease some types of nerve pain. The patch contains a form of capsaicin (the substance that causes chilli peppers to be hot) and can be used alongside your usual pain relief medicines. Qutenza[®] is given as a single use medication. The patch will be placed on your skin for 30 to 60 minutes and may make the nerves less sensitive to pain.

What does the procedure involve?

A nurse who has been trained in the application of Qutenza[®] will mark the painful areas on your skin with a marker pen. Any hair will be clipped using scissors (please **do not** do this at home before your appointment).

You should take your usual pain relief before the treatment.

The Qutenza[®] patch will be cut to fit the area being treated and up to 2 patches may be used.

The patch will then be applied and a bandage, film or dressing will be placed over the patch to keep it in place.

If your feet or hands are being treated, the Qutenza[®] patch will be left in place for 30 minutes. For pain elsewhere the patch will be left in place for 60 minutes. After this time the nurse will remove the patch and apply a cleansing gel to sooth the area. This will be left on your skin for at least 1 minute, then cleaned off with cool water.

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Department

Pain
Management

Review due

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**Patient
Information**

It is very common for the skin to sting or become red with a burning sensation during and after the treatment.

Qutenza[®] can cause your blood pressure to rise. Your blood pressure will be checked regularly before the treatment and while you are wearing the patch.

If you experience severe pain, the area will be cooled or you may be advised to take some of your own pain relief medication.

How soon will I feel pain relief after treatment?

Most people experience some relief on the first day of treatment, but it can take up to 2 weeks to get the full benefit. If you are still in a lot of pain after this time, please let your pain clinic nurse know. The contact details are at the end of this leaflet.

When shouldn't I use Qutenza[®]?

You should not use Qutenza[®] if you are:

- allergic to capsaicin
- suffer from unstable or poorly controlled high blood pressure
- if you have had any recent heart problems
- if you are under 18 years of age

Where is the treatment done?

The treatment is normally carried out in the outpatient department. We have clinics running at Gloucestershire Royal, Cheltenham General and in Hereford Hospital. We will try to offer you the clinic location closest to your home address.

Before the treatment

Take your usual medication including your normal pain relief. Clothing over the site should be comfortable and loose fitting. Footwear should also be comfortable such as slippers or flip flops. Please allow 2 to 3 hours for your appointment. Feel free to bring a book or magazine with you. You are welcome to bring a friend or relative with you to the appointment.

**Patient
Information**

Special precautions

- Do not breathe in or sniff close to the Qutenza[®] patches. This may cause coughing or sneezing.
- Do not touch the patch with your hands as it may cause burning and stinging.
- Do not touch your eyes, mouth or other sensitive areas during the treatment.
- Do not try to remove the patch yourself.

The Qutenza[®] patch will not be used over broken skin or wounds.

Your nurse will wear gloves for the treatment, but if you accidentally touch the treated area before the cleansing gel is applied, please tell your nurse who will show you where to wash your hands.

Possible side effects

The most common side effects of using the Qutenza[®] patches include:

- The skin becoming red and painful (stinging or burning). This is very common.
- The skin becoming itchy with bumps, blisters, swelling and dryness.
- Rarely, changes in skin sensations happen. This means that you may not be able to feel, for example, something which is hot or sharp and is usually temporary.

The cleansing gel used during the procedure may cause your eyes and skin to be itchy. If this happens, please contact your GP or the pain clinic nurse on the number at the end of this leaflet.

Following your treatment

You can expect the treated area to be red and to feel a burning sensation at the site. This will get better over the next few days. During this time, you should avoid having hot baths and showers or allowing direct sunlight to the area. You should also avoid vigorous exercise.

**Patient
Information**

Cool packs wrapped in a towel or your regular pain relief will help with any discomfort.

We will ask you to feedback your pain scores at 6 weeks – using the QR code or web address you were given at your appointment. We need to hear back from you before we can book you a follow up appointment. This is really important. If for some reason technology fails then please leave a message with the secretary, Angela Boucher, on 0300 422 2558.

Driving and operating machinery

You must not drive yourself home after the treatment, so please arrange for someone to collect you from the hospital.

How often can I have the treatment?

Every 90 days (3 months), as needed.

Can I use Qutenza[®] if I am pregnant or breastfeeding?

If you are pregnant, or think you might be pregnant, or you are breastfeeding, please speak to your pain consultant or pain nurse.

Contact information**Pain Clinic**

Tel: 0300 422 2558

Please leave a message and your call will be returned as soon as possible.

For urgent calls, please contact your GP or the NHS 111.

NHS 111

Tel: 111

**Patient
Information**

Further information

You will find more information about pain relief on the Gloucestershire Hospitals website.

Website: www.gloshospitals.nhs.uk/our-services/services-we-offer/pain-management-service/about/

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Making a choice

Shared Decision Making

If you are asked to make a choice, you may have lots of questions that you want to ask. You may also want to talk over your options with your family or friends. It can help to write a list of the questions you want answered and take it to your appointment.



Ask 3 Questions

To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions if you are asked to make a choice about your healthcare.

1. What are my options?
2. What are the pros and cons of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?

These resources have been adapted with kind permission from the MAGIC Programme, supported by the Health Foundation

* Ask 3 Questions is based on Shepherd HL, et al. Three questions that patients can ask to improve the quality of information physicians give about treatment options: A cross-over trial. Patient Education and Counselling, 2011;84: 379-85



<https://aqua.nhs.uk/resources/shared-decision-making-case-studies/>