

# IV Lidocaine Infusion

## Why is this medication prescribed?

Lidocaine is a local anesthetic used to treat certain nerve pain conditions when the usual nerve pain medications or interventions were unsuccessful. This could be due to a lack of effectiveness or side effects.

## When does this medication start to work and how long will it work for?

- If lidocaine is going to provide pain relief, you should notice a difference within 2 days. The duration of benefit from lidocaine varies greatly between patients so it is difficult to predict how each patient will respond to an IV lidocaine infusion.
- ***To assess the benefit of each lidocaine infusion, it is very important to have clearly established goals for what you hope to accomplish with the lidocaine infusion. To assess your progress in achieving these goals, it is important to keep a diary describing your pain relief and function after each lidocaine infusion.***

## How do you know if this medication is working?

- A positive response to an IV lidocaine infusion is considered as 30% or more pain relief along with the ability to function better. Functioning better such as participation in physiotherapy/occupational therapy activities, returning to work or performing household chores that were previously difficult to do. These benefits should last more than 3 weeks after the infusion. The ability to reduce opioid use is also considered a positive outcome.
- If the goals of a lidocaine infusion are not achieved, the dose may be re-assessed because a higher dosage may be appropriate. Otherwise, lidocaine infusions will be stopped.

## What side effects can this medication cause?

- More common side effects include: tiredness, headache, dizziness, and nausea
  - If nausea occurs, an anti-nausea/vomiting medication called ondansetron may be given with the lidocaine infusion
- Side effects that can represent lidocaine toxicity include:
  - Numbness/tingling around the mouth
  - Sudden, severe difficulty breathing
  - Low blood pressure
  - Ringing of the ears, slurred speech, confusion
  - Irregular heart rhythms
  - Seizures

Please tell your nurse if you are experiencing side effects during your lidocaine infusion.

CARING FOR THE BODY, MIND & SPIRIT SINCE 1869

Renowned for compassionate care, St. Joseph's is one of the best academic health care organizations in Canada dedicated to helping people live to their fullest by minimizing the effects of injury, disease and disability through excellence in care, teaching and research.



[sjhc.london.on.ca](http://sjhc.london.on.ca)

## What special precautions should I follow?

- Inform your health care providers of any allergies you may have.
  - If you have had an allergic reaction to a local anesthetic in the past, it is important to know which local anesthetic you reacted to and the details of the reaction.
- Some people may have other medical conditions that can increase the risk of harm with lidocaine use. Not everyone is a candidate for an IV lidocaine infusion. It is important to tell your doctor if you have or have had any of the following health issues:
  - An arrhythmia (heart rhythm abnormalities)
  - Seizure disorder
  - Liver or kidney disease
  - Are pregnant or breastfeeding or may be in the near future
- Tell your health care providers about all the medications you take (prescription, non-prescription, herbals, over-the-counter products, etc.) so drug interactions can be minimized.

## Driving limitations following lidocaine infusion

- You must have a driver to take you home after receiving an IV lidocaine infusion.
  - ***If you do not have a driver to take you home when you arrive at your appointment, your lidocaine infusion will be cancelled.***
- You should not drive again until you are able to concentrate and have a clear state of mind.