Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

About Your Capsaicin 8% Patch (Qutenza®) Treatment

This information explains capsaicin 8% patch (Qutenza ®) treatment, including what it is and what to expect during your treatment.

About capsaicin 8% patch treatment

A capsaicin (kap-SAY-uh-sin) 8% patch is a treatment to help relieve nerve pain caused by:

- **Peripheral neuropathy** (peh-RIH-feh-rul noor-AH-puh-thee). This is nerve damage that affects the nerves outside of your brain and spinal cord. This can cause weakness, numbness, and pain, often in your hands and feet. To learn more, read *About Peripheral Neuropathy* (www.mskcc.org/pe/about-peripheral-neuropathy).
- **Diabetic neuropathy**. This is nerve damage caused by high blood sugar levels.
- **Post herpetic pain**. This is nerve damage caused by shingles.

At MSK, your doctor may recommend this treatment if you

have chemotherapy induced peripheral neuropathy (CIPN). CIPN is nerve pain caused by chemotherapy. If you have diabetic neuropathy or another type of neuropathy, talk with your doctor about what treatment is right for you.

You'll get your capsaicin 8% patch in your doctor's office. Your appointment may take up to 2 hours. Your doctor will place the patch on the area where you're feeling pain. The patch works by lowering the pain signals your body sends to your brain from the area. This will help you feel less pain.

Your capsaicin 8% patch will give you relief for about 3 months. You'll come in for another treatment every 3 months.

This treatment may raise your blood pressure. Tell your doctor if you have a history of high blood pressure.

What to expect during your treatment

Your healthcare provider will talk with you about your treatment and answer your questions. They'll keep track of your blood pressure before, during, and after your procedure.

Getting your skin ready for the patch

Once you're ready, your healthcare provider will clean your skin with soap and water. Then, they will put an anesthetic

gel (numbing medicine) on the area where the patch will go. The gel will numb the area and make the patch more comfortable.

You'll keep the gel on for about 30 minutes. Once the area is numb, your healthcare provider will wipe off the gel. They will clean the area with soap and water again.

Putting the patch on

Your healthcare provider will measure and cut the patch to the size of the area where you have pain. Then, they will place the patch on your skin. They may also wrap the patch in a bandage to make sure it stays in place.

You'll have the patch on for about 30 to 60 minutes. Do not touch it. It's important to avoid getting the medicine on other parts of your body.

You'll be sitting in the exam room for this treatment. You can bring a book or something to help you pass the time.

Taking the patch off

Your healthcare provider will take the patch off. They will put cleansing gel on the area to clean it. After 1 minute, they will wipe the gel off and clean the area with soap and water.

What to expect after your treatment

- You may feel burning or stinging in the area where the patch was. This will go away after a few days.
  - Your doctor will give you a prescription for lidocaine prilocaine (EMLA® Cream). Put this on the area every 6 hours as needed until the burning goes away.
  - Place a washcloth wet with cold water on the area for some relief.
  - You can also put an ice pack on your skin to help relieve any burning. Don't keep the ice pack on for longer than 20 minutes.
- The treated area may be sensitive to heat for a few days. Follow these guidelines after your treatment. Your care team will tell you how long to follow them.
  - Do not take hot showers or baths. Only take cold showers or showers at room temperature (about 70 °F (25 °C)). You can also take sponge baths.
  - Do not use heating pads, electric blankets, heat lamps, or saunas.
  - Do not do any strenuous exercise or activities that may raise your body temperature. Strenuous exercise is exercise that takes lots of energy or effort.
  - Do not put your skin in direct sunlight.

- You can expect to feel less pain a few days after treatment.

When to call your healthcare provider

Call your healthcare provider if:

- You have a fever of 100.3 °F (38 °C) or higher.
- You have headaches, dizziness, or changes in your eyesight. These can be signs of high blood pressure.
- You still feeling burning or stinging from the patch 48 hours (2 days) after treatment.
- You have any new or unexplained symptoms.
- You have any questions or concerns.

If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

About Your Capsaicin 8% Patch (Qutenza®) Treatment - Last updated on December 18, 2024
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