

Qutenza (Capsaicin 8%) patch

This leaflet is for patients being prescribed a Qutenza patch to manage pain.

What is a Qutenza patch?

Qutenza is a dermal patch for use on your skin. It is designed to provide pain relief in people who have nerve pain due to damaged nerves in the skin. Qutenza can be used either alone or in combination with other medicines that you may take to treat your pain.

The active ingredient in Qutenza is a synthetic form of capsaicin, the compound that gives chilli peppers their heat sensation. The capsaicin contained in Qutenza acts on pain-sensing nerves in the skin, making them less sensitive to pain.

Your doctor has prescribed Qutenza to help relieve your peripheral neuropathic pain. Peripheral neuropathic pain can have several different causes, including:

- A complication of some diseases, such as shingles.
- A reaction to some medicines.
- Nerve damage from an accident or injury.
- Pain following surgery
- Diabetic peripheral neuropathy

Are there any restrictions that prevent me from using Qutenza?

- Qutenza must not be used if you are allergic to chilli peppers or any of the ingredients of the Qutenza patch.
- If you have unstable or poorly controlled high blood pressure or have recently had heart problems, please let your doctor know.
- Qutenza should not be used in patients under 18 years of age.
- Qutenza should not be applied to broken skin or wounds.
- Qutenza should not be applied to any part of your head or face.
- You should tell your doctor if you are pregnant, or you might be pregnant or breastfeeding.
- Uncontrolled or severe respiratory disease
- Acute illness for example a chest infection

Outpatient appointments and Coronavirus (COVID-19)

- If you have experienced any COVID-19 symptoms (a new persistent cough, temperature or loss of taste or smell) within two weeks of your outpatient appointment, please do not attend and call us to rearrange for another date.

- When you arrive at your appointment you will be asked a series of questions relating to COVID-19 symptoms and have your temperature checked. This is policy for all outpatient departments in the Trust.

What will the treatment involve and how long will it take?

Qutenza will be applied by a healthcare professional that has been specially trained in Qutenza patch application.

A healthcare professional will wash and dry the treatment area (the most painful area on your skin) before application, it will then be marked with a pen or marker. Any hair in the treatment area will be clipped using scissors (you should wait for a healthcare professional to do this; you should not remove any hair before your appointment).

Depending on the size of the painful area, up to three patches could be applied at the same treatment. The Qutenza patch will be left on for 30 minutes if you are being treated for nerve pain on your foot, or for 60 minutes if you are being treated for nerve pain on other parts of your body. After this time, a healthcare professional will carefully remove the Qutenza patch.

It is very common for the skin to sting or become red with a burning sensation during and after Qutenza treatment for a short while. Because of this temporary pain, your blood pressure may go up slightly and therefore your blood pressure will be monitored during treatment.

If you experience a lot of pain, local cooling will be applied, or you can take your own pain medicine.

How soon will I begin to feel pain relief after treatment?

Most people will start to feel some pain relief on the first day the patch is applied. However, it may take up to 14 days before you feel the full effect at the treatment site. You should tell your doctor or nurse in your follow-up plan if you are still experiencing a lot of pain 14 days after treatment with Qutenza.

How should I prepare for the treatment?

If you take any regular medication, take it as usual before coming to clinic. You should wear loose-fitting clothing over the treatment site or, if your feet are being treated, wear comfortable footwear such as slippers or flip flops.

The appointment may last up to two hours so you may want to bring a snack, book/magazines or music to keep you entertained during the treatment.

How often will I need to receive treatment with Qutenza?

Treatment can be given again, at a minimum of every 3 months, if required.

Are there any side effects?

Like all medicine, Qutenza can cause side effects, although not everybody gets them. It is very common for skin to become red and painful (stinging or burning sensation) in the area where the Qutenza patch is applied.

Other common side effects are; itching, bumps, blister, swelling and dryness on the area where the patch is applied.

Can I drive and use machinery after treatment?

Qutenza will not have any direct effect on your ability to drive or use machinery because only small amounts of the active substance pass into the bloodstream and remain there for only short period of the time.

Can I have bath or shower after Qutenza treatment?

Avoid having a hot bath or shower 24-48 hours. This may irritate the skin where the patch has been applied and cause a burning sensation or increase in pain. Using lukewarm or cool water may be more tolerable.

Any queries?

If you have any concerns regarding this treatment, please contact:

Pain Management Unit 0118 322 8261 (Mon-Fri 9am-5pm).

Out of hours/weekends: please contact your GP or the out of hours service for advice.

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

Pain Management Unit, January 2023

Next review due: January 2025