

Lutrol gel with lidocaine

'Lutrol' is the registered trade name for a product widely used as a thickening or gelling agent in the pharmaceutical industry. Its viscosity depends on its concentration and temperature, making it a *thermoreversible* gel. Its viscosity increases more rapidly above 20°C and is most solid at body temperature, making it a practical preparation for providing a wound barrier. It was noted as a potentially useful carrier for other agents by MacGregor in 1994.

A preparation containing Lutrol 24% in water with lidocaine 2% was first made at Guys and St Thomas' Hospital Pharmacy as part of an exploratory study. It proved very effective in relieving pain in malignant wounds, especially in areas where dressings are difficult to apply and keep in place. (Beynon 2003). This preparation has continued to be made by the licensed manufacturing unit at St Thomas' Hospital and is used within the hospice where the multi-disciplinary team decides when it is appropriate to use.

Stock may be kept at room temperature but in warmer weather and in centrally heated environments it is easier to store and use from the refrigerator. Cooling the gel by storing in the refrigerator or standing the container in ice decreases its viscosity, enabling it to be poured onto the wound. The gel will set once it reaches body temperature, creating a protective layer whilst the lidocaine provides analgesia. It is normally applied at dressing changes but the analgesic effect normally lasts for about 6-8 hours, so it may be necessary to apply more frequently to achieve prolonged analgesia, although in the home setting this may be impractical. The gel can be removed from the skin quite easily using warm water.

GPs can prescribe Lutrol with lidocaine 2% on FP10. The pack size is 5ml and the usual application instructions are '*to be used with dressing changes up to twice a day*'. The product is made under sterile conditions so a new container will be needed for each application.

Community pharmacists can order it from St Thomas' Pharmacy Manufacturing unit order line on 020 7188 4992
Please be aware that it takes several days to process this.

Refs: MacGregor KJ et al. Palliative Medicine 1994; 8:76-77
Beynon T. et al. J Pain Symptom Management 2003; 26:776-780