

# How to Apply Lidocaine (EMLA®) Cream

## What is EMLA® cream and what is it used for?

EMLA® is the brand name of a cream that combines 2 numbing agents – lidocaine and prilocaine. It is used to numb the skin and lessen any pain before a port is accessed or an IV started, and for other invasive procedures to the skin. It works by blocking nerve signals.

- Only use this cream when your incision is fully healed. (about 7 days after your port is placed.)
- Use the cream exactly as directed on the label or as directed by your doctor. Do not use more cream than instructed. The medication is absorbed through your skin and using too much can cause serious side effects affecting your heart and breathing. If you have symptoms of an overdose, seek medical attention.
- After applying the cream, cover the area **with a bandage or plastic wrap** so the cream can be absorbed by your skin. This will also protect your clothes.
- Once the area is numb, be careful not to injure it accidentally. Avoid very hot or very cold temperatures to the area – it can cause skin damage even though you won't feel it.
- Make sure your doctor knows all the medications, vitamins, and herbal products you take.

## Instructions

- Apply the cream 1 hour before your scheduled procedure. The numbing effect will last up to 3 hours.
- Wash your hands before and after applying the cream.
- Open tube (you may have to pierce a new tube with the point on the inside of the cap).
- Find your port area.
- Point the tube and squeeze a small amount, about the size of a quarter onto your port area.
- Do not cover the treated skin unless your doctor has told you to do so. If your doctor says to cover the area, use either a non-stick dressing or plastic wrap. Secure the dressing with tape, if needed. Do not use gauze or band aids on cream (they will absorb the cream).
- If you get the cream in your eyes, ears, nose, mouth, or on skin that has open cuts or scrapes, rinse the area thoroughly right away.
- Store EMLA cream at room temperature away from moisture and heat. Don't let it freeze.
- Common side effects: Mild burning or changes in skin color(where applied); itching, rash.
- Call your doctor right away if your skin has swelling, redness, or bruising; or you have dizziness or blurry vision, or confusion after applying EMLA.
- Get emergency medical help if you have signs of an allergic reaction to EMLA: hives; difficulty breathing; swelling of your face, lips, tongue, or throat.
- Questions?: Call your doctor/nurse who prescribed EMLA.