



What if there was a way to deliver treatment that might address some issues experienced when using oral medications alone? Is an alternative approach to traditional dopamine agonists. Utilizing a small patch, this unique medication delivery system aims to provide more targeted relief with fewer side effects.

What is the rotigotine transdermal system?

The rotigotine transdermal system (brand name Neupro®) delivers a medication called rotigotine (a dopamine agonist) through the skin via a small, sticky patch (transdermal patch). It is a dopamine agonist that works by stimulating dopamine receptors in the brain, helping to control the motor symptoms of Parkinson's.

The patch can be an alternative to oral medications or added as part of a medication regime. This can be helpful especially for those who struggle with swallowing or whose bodies don't absorb oral medications well. As Parkinson's progresses, oral medications can become less predictable, making continuous delivery mechanisms like the rotigotine transdermal system an appealing option.

How Does it Work?

The patch is applied to clean, dry skin on the stomach, hip, thigh, or upper arm once a day. It releases the dopamine agonist continually over 24 hours, avoiding the on and off times seen with oral pills. The patch is waterproof, so you don't need to remove it while showering or swimming but be sure to move it to a different spot each day to prevent skin irritation. The rotigotine transdermal system comes in four different strengths – 2mg, 4mg, 6mg and 8mg. Your doctor will determine the appropriate strength based on your symptoms and response to treatment.

Eligibility

The rotigotine transdermal system is approved for use in Alberta and is often used alongside levodopa for people with advanced Parkinson disease. However, to get it covered by Alberta Health, you need to apply for special authorization, which lasts for six months.

Rotigotine Transdermal System (Neupro®) - Is it effective?

If your doctor still thinks you need it after that time, the permission can be automatically renewed. It's a good idea to talk to your doctor to see if you qualify for this coverage.

Potential Side Effects

Like all medications, the rotigotine transdermal system can cause side effects, which are unintended effects that can occur alongside the desired outcome of treatment. While the primary goal of the rotigotine transdermal system is to manage symptoms of Parkinson disease, these additional effects can vary from mild to severe and may affect different parts of the body. Common side effects include (but are not limited to) nausea, vomiting, drowsiness, trouble sleeping, skin reactions where the patch is applied, dizziness, loss of appetite, excessive sweating, and vision problems. These effects typically lessen over time as your body adjusts to the treatment.

The most frequent side effect reported is redness, itching, or swelling at the patch's application site. To minimize this irritation, it's important to rotate the patch's location each day, avoiding the same spot repeatedly.

In rare cases, serious side effects may occur. These include confusion, agitation, hallucinations, severe dizziness, fainting, strong urges (such as gambling

or increased sexual desire), rapid heartbeat, or new uncontrolled movements. While serious side effects are uncommon, they can happen. If any of these symptoms arise, it's important to contact your doctor immediately.

Is It Effective?

Hitting the Canadian market in 2013, this patch-based therapy has been a significant advancement in the alternative, long-term treatment of Parkinson disease. It has proven to be effective, with studies indicating that many people see notable improvements in motor control and daily functionality over extended periods, often surpassing one year of use. From a lived experience, people with Parkinson's and their loved ones value the efficiency of the patch and the effectiveness of its symptom control. The patch offers a non-invasive, manageable approach to symptom control, leading to fewer motor fluctuations, reduced stiffness, and enhanced daily functioning.



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