

Iontophoresis.....Can your patients receiving physical therapy benefit?

Many of you have called our office asking for information on Iontophoresis. You see it on the physical therapy prescription pads... What is it? How does it work? When is it used?

Iontophoresis is a drug delivery system that used to deliver water soluble drugs through the skin to an injured body part. Because topical application fails to deliver therapeutic dosages of hydrophilic drugs, a low level DC current has shown to deliver therapeutic levels of the drug across the skin barrier. The drug is "pushed" through the skin barrier using a DC current's opposite ionic charge or polarity of the drug being used. Typical drugs delivered by iontophoresis with conditions treated are:

dexamethasone sodium phosphate- Tendonitis, bursitis, arthritis, tenosynovitis

Acetic Acid- Calcium deposits, calcified tendonitis

Lidocaine- trigeminal neuralgia

Salicylate- Analgesic, scar tissue, myalgias

Iontophoresis is an excellent treatment choice to consider before injecting a site to reduce inflammation. Patients adverse to needles or pain, or whose age or condition make injections contraindicated should be considered for a treatment regime of Iontophoresis. We use this modality for three consecutive treatments and look for decreased pain, inflammation and improved function, ROM and strength. If these results are occurring we continue with the treatment for up to 12 sessions. We discontinue at any point the modality does not appear to be affecting objective, measurable standards.

Dr. Joel Brenner, Medical Director of CHKD Sports Medicine regularly prescribes iontophoresis treatment as part of the physical therapy plan for his patients. "I have found iontophoresis to be an important part of my comprehensive treatment plan of overuse injuries. It helps speed up the recovery process in problems such as apophysitis and tendonitis."

Dr. Brenner Picture here???

Along with a PT program to include ROM, stretching, strengthening, a few of the typical conditions we see successful outcomes within a few treatments include: Lateral/medial epicondylitis, tendonitis- Rotator Cuff, achilles and patellar, bursitis- subacromial, patellar, calcaneal, Iliotibial band syndrome, carpal tunnel.

A new iontophoresis delivery system available to Physical Therapists and used by our practice, is called Hybresis which eliminates the disadvantages of standard iontophoresis treatments. Typical treatment disadvantages include long treatment time in the clinic or wearing a patch, intolerance to DC current such as skin burning or irritation and unknown drug delivery dosage.

The Hybresis system delivers the medication in a 3 minute treatment followed by a short 2 hour time period to wear the patch while a low voltage built in battery delivers the rest of the medication. This treatment system is able to deliver a consistent, therapeutic dose despite skin thickness/resistance of various body parts.

Picture here of Patch on Shoulder or Elbow

Next time you or your patient want to avoid an injection for common musculoskeletal conditions, consider checking iontophoresis on your Physical Therapy script pad. For more information on Iontophoresis and to review published articles on its effectiveness in clinical studies call 1-800-328-2536 ext 8506. For more information on Hybresis visit: [www.hybresis.com](http://www.hybresis.com)

*Jeff Hartline, MPT, CSCS received his MS in Physical Therapy from Hahnemann School of Medicine in 1988. He is owner and president of Southeastern Physical Therapy, specializing in acute and chronic spinal pain, orthopedic physical therapy, sports medicine, work hardening and is certified to perform functional capacity evaluations.*