

Information for Patients about
**Amitriptyline or
Nortriptyline**



Amitriptyline and Nortriptyline are medicines which are licensed to treat depression at higher doses (75mg and above). However, at lower doses they have also been found to be helpful in treating certain types of pain.

Dosage and Administration:

Take only as directed. These directions may change. These medicines are usually started at a low dose and then increased slowly to find the best dose. Your GP will advise you of this. You should usually take this medicine in the evening.

It may take 2 - 4 weeks before you feel pain relief. It may take longer to get to the right dose for you and to allow the medicine to build up in your body.

Possible Side Effects:

The commonest side effects are:

- Drowsiness may occur as you increase your dose. If you feel especially drowsy in the morning it may help to take this medicine earlier in the evening. If drowsiness occurs, you should not drive or operate machinery, until the drowsiness stops. You must tell the DVLA if you are on any medicines which affect your driving.
- Drinking alcohol could increase drowsiness and dizziness and you should be very careful or stop drinking alcohol.
- Dry mouth. Sucking sugar free fruit sweets or chewing gum may help this.
- Constipation. You may need to take a gentle laxative to prevent this.
- Difficulty starting to pass urine.
- Blurred vision.
- Dizziness or light headedness when changing your position from lying or sitting to standing.

- Other common side effects include: tiredness, restlessness, mild headache, nausea, hot flushes, sweating, changes in sexual function, trembling, or weight gain.



These effects are often mild and may go away during treatment. If they are severe or last for more than a few days then you should get advice from your GP, Community Pharmacist or NHS 24 on **08454 24 24 24**, especially if you experience either blurred vision or difficulty passing urine.

If you develop yellowing of the skin or eyes, a fever, or tenderness around the middle, you should tell your GP immediately.

If you experience any other unusual symptoms whilst taking your medication you should get advice from your GP.

Increasing the Dose of Amitriptyline or Nortriptyline

Below is a guide on how to increase your medicine. You may increase it more slowly if you feel you are getting side effects, or you can stay at a lower dose if you are getting good pain relief (you don't have to keep increasing the dose if you do not need to). However do not increase your dose faster than the recommended increase below.

If you are starting on 10mg at night

Week 1 - Take 10 mg at night

Week 2 - Take 20 mg at night

Week 3 - Take 30 mg at night

Week 4 - Take 40 mg at night

Week 5 - Take 50 mg at night and continue if tolerated and pain improves.

If you are starting on 25mg at night

Week 1 and week 2 Take 25 mg at night

Week 3 and week 4 Take 50 mg at night

Week 5 and 6 Take 75 mg at night and continue if tolerated and pain relief improves.

If you are experiencing side effects, do not continue to increase the dose but continue at the dose you were able to tolerate for one week and then try to increase the dose again.

If you experience any side effects whilst increasing your medication please reduce the dose back to your previous dose.

Stopping Medications

If your GP, Community Pharmacist or NHS 24 decide that you should stop taking this medicine, do not suddenly stop taking it, unless advised to do so. You should gradually reduce the dose. Below is an example of how to reduce the dose. You should always contact your GP for directions.

Day 0	75mg
Day1-3	50mg
Day 4-6	25mg
Day 7	Stop

Day 0	50mg
Day1-3	40mg
Day 4-6	30mg
Day 7-10	20mg
Day 11-13	10mg
Day 14	Stop

Some people can stop this medicine suddenly and have no problems. However some people may get withdrawal symptoms if it is stopped suddenly - such as insomnia, headache, flu syndrome, anxiety etc which should only last a few days. These symptoms are more likely to occur if people have been on this medicine for more than a few months.



Remember!

- Don't run out of medicine.
- Ask for a repeat prescription before your medicine is finished.
- If you have any questions about this medicine please contact your GP or community pharmacist.

This leaflet is a summary of some information. However, you should still always read the manufacturers information which comes with your medication.

