

Amitriptyline or Nortriptyline for Headache

Information and advice for patients

Neurology

What is the medication and how do I take it?

Amitriptyline or Nortriptyline are used to prevent the headaches from occurring. The dose has to be increased gradually as given below. Continue increasing the dose until it is effective at suppressing your headaches or you reach the maximum dose of 100mgs daily. If you start to get any side effects please let your General Practitioner or Neurologist know as soon as possible, to discuss reducing the dose to a level you previously tolerated, titrating the medication up more slowly, or stopping the medication.

Amitriptyline

	Evening
For 14 days take:	10mgs
Increase by 10mg every 14days until reaching 50mgs	
Thereafter take:	50mgs

If after 3 months the headaches are not suppressed and you are tolerating the side effects without problem then continue to increase the amitriptyline as below.

	Evening
For 14 days take:	60mgs
Increase by 10mg every 14days until reaching 100mgs	
Thereafter take:	100mgs

Nortriptyline

	Evening
For 14 days take:	10mgs
Increase by 10mg every 14days until reaching 50mgs	
Thereafter take:	50mgs

If after 3 months the headaches are not suppressed and you are tolerating the side effects without problem then continue to increase the Nortriptyline as below.

	Evening
For 14 days take:	60mgs
Increase by 10mg every 14days until reaching 100mgs	
If tolerating increase after 2 weeks to	100mgs

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What are the side effects?

As with all medications a small number of patients will experience side effects. Common side effects of these types of medications include:

- Sedation
- Fatigue
- Dry mouth
- Constipation

Rare side effects include:

- Mood changes
- Heart arrhythmias

Only continue to increase the doses of these drugs if your side effects are tolerable.

Please ask your General Practitioner for a prescription as detailed above. Details of the consultation treatment plan are outlined in a letter which will be sent to you and your GP.

Further information

NHS Website

Amitriptyline for pain and migraine

<https://www.nhs.uk/medicines/amitriptyline-for-pain/>

Nortriptyline

<https://www.nhs.uk/medicines/nortriptyline/>

(Websites accessed & checked 14 April 2022)

For more information about our hospitals and services please see our websites

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www.facebook.com/SWBHnhs.

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Sources used for the information in this leaflet

National institute for health and care excellence (NICE) (2012). *Headaches in over 12s: diagnosis and management clinical guideline* [CG150]. Available at: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg150> (Accessed 14 April 2022).

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