

Topiramate Regime in Headache in Primary Care

Information for patients and carers

Neurology

What is Topiramate?

Topiramate is used to prevent 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 400mgs 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, increasing more slowly if possible, or stopping the medication. Topiramate's half-life is 21 hours. This means this drug can be taken once a day.

	Evening
For 14 days take:	25mgs
For 14 days take:	50mgs
For 14 days take:	75mgs
Thereafter take:	100mgs

Wait 3-4 months to evaluate effect. If tolerable side effects, dose may be increased to 200mgs and even 400mgs **UNDER SPECIALIST CARE**.

What are the side effects?

As with all medications, there are potential side effects experienced by a small number of patients. The most common include:

- Tiredness
- Pins and needles in the fingers and toes
- Difficulty with language
- Diarrhoea
- Dry mouth
- Decreased appetite
- Difficulty with concentration
- Anxiety
- Mood swings
- Vision disorders
- Dizziness
- Numbness
- Nausea

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- Indigestion
- Weight loss
- Forgetfulness
- Difficulty sleeping
- Depression
- Change in taste
- Kidney stones (1% risk with long term use)

Rare side effects include: sudden blurring of vision, pain and redness of the eye occurring in the first month of starting topiramate. This can indicate raised pressure in the eye (glaucoma). If you develop these symptoms, especially in the first few weeks of starting the medication you should tell your doctor immediately.

Do not stop taking topiramate unless your doctor tells you to. If your treatment is stopped it should be done gradually.

Pregnancy and Breast feeding

This drug is not recommended if you are pregnant, planning a pregnancy or are breastfeeding.

Women of childbearing age should take adequate contraceptive precautions.

The use of topiramate has been associated with birth defects in a small number of infants when it has been used during pregnancy.

Higher doses of the oral contraceptive pill are required whilst taking topiramate. Women taking the oral contraceptive pill should discuss the dose with their GP.

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

The migraine trust

<https://migrainetrust.org/>

(Website accessed & checked 01 August 2022)

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

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Sources used for the information in this leaflet

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