

Patient information

Amitriptyline for chronic facial pain

Liverpool University Dental Hospital

This leaflet aims to answer your questions about taking amitriptyline to treat your chronic facial pain.

What is amitriptyline?

Amitriptyline is a drug which belongs to a group of medicines called tricyclic antidepressants (TCAs). Amitriptyline is widely used to treat depression but, at lower doses, medical studies have proven that amitriptyline can treat pain. Amitriptyline is only available on prescription.

Taking an unlicensed medicine

The use of amitriptyline for treating certain facial pain conditions is unlicensed, which means that the manufacturer of the medicine has not specified it can be used in this way. However, there is evidence that it works to treat these.

How do I take the medicine?

It's normal to take amitriptyline once a day. It is best to take it before bedtime, or in the evening, because it can make you feel sleepy. If you find that you are still feeling drowsy in the morning you could try taking it earlier in the evening. You can take it with or without food. Swallow the tablet with a drink of water.

You may notice a difference after a week, but it can take up to six weeks for amitriptyline to work as a painkiller.

How much will I take?

The maximum dose of amitriptyline for treating pain is 75mg a day.

Week	Dose
1	10mg
2	20mg
3	30mg
4	40mg
5 onwards	50mg

What should I do if I forget to take the medicine?

If you forget a dose, take it as soon as you remember, unless it's within 12 hours of your next dose. In this case, just leave out the missed dose and take your next dose as normal. If amitriptyline makes you sleepy and you need to drive or use tools or machinery, leave out the missed dose and carry on with the next dose as normal.

Never take two doses at the same time. Never take an extra dose to make up for a forgotten one. If you often forget doses, it may help to set an alarm to remind you. You could also ask your pharmacist for advice on other ways to help you remember to take your medicine.

Are there any side effects?

Like all medicines, amitriptyline can cause side effects in some people, but many people have no side effects or only minor ones. Some of the common side effects gradually improve as your body gets used to it.

Amitriptyline can cause extra side effects if you stop taking it suddenly.

Common side effects

Because the dose of amitriptyline for pain is lower than the dose for depression the common side effects tend to be milder and go away within a few days.

Keep taking the medicine but talk to your doctor or pharmacist if these side effects bother you or don't go away:

- constipation
- dizziness
- dry mouth
- feeling sleepy
- difficulty peeing
- headache.

Serious side effects

It happens rarely, but some people have a serious side effect after taking amitriptyline. Call your GP or attend the Emergency Department (A&E) straight away if you get:

- a fast or irregular heartbeat
- yellow skin, or the whites of your eyes go yellow (these can be signs of a liver problem),
- a headache, feel confused or weak, get muscle cramps or a seizure (these can be signs of a low sodium level in your blood)
- thoughts about harming yourself or ending your life
- eye pain, a change in your eyesight, swelling or redness in or around the eye

- severe constipation or you're unable to pee and it's causing severe tummy pain
- weakness on one side of your body, trouble speaking or thinking, loss of balance or blurred vision (these can be signs of a stroke).

Serious allergic reaction

In rare cases, it is possible to have a serious allergic reaction to amitriptyline. Contact your GP or go to the Emergency Department straight away if:

- you get a skin rash that may include itchy, red, swollen, blistered or peeling skin
- you're wheezing, you get tightness in the chest or throat
- you have trouble breathing or talking
- your mouth, face, lips, tongue or throat start swelling.

These are not all the side effects of amitriptyline. For a full list see the leaflet inside your medicine packet. You can report any suspected side effect to the UK safety scheme at, w: <https://yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk/>.

Is there anything else I need to know?

Amitriptyline is generally not recommended in pregnancy or while breastfeeding. Your doctor will only prescribe amitriptyline for your pain while you're pregnant or breastfeeding if the benefits of taking the medicine outweigh the risks.

Lots of medicines and amitriptyline can interfere with each other and increase the chances of side effects. Make sure that your doctor and pharmacist know you're taking amitriptyline before starting or stopping any other medicine.

Do not take St John's wort, the herbal remedy for depression, while you are being treated with amitriptyline. It will increase your risk of side effects.

How do I get a repeat prescription?

Your GP will give you a repeat prescription for amitriptyline, which you can take to your local pharmacy. Please make sure you request your repeat prescription early enough so that you don't run out or risk missing any doses of your medication.

Useful sources of information

NHS website, w: www.nhs.uk/medicines/amitriptyline-for-pain/

For further information about the potential risks and side effects, please read the information leaflet supplied by the manufacturer within the box. Alternatively, please contact the Oral Medicine Department. The department is open Monday to Friday 9.00 am to 5.00 pm.

Feedback

Your feedback is important to us and helps us influence care in the future.

Following your discharge from hospital or attendance at your outpatient appointment you will receive a text asking if you would recommend our service to others. Please take the time to text back, you will not be charged for the text and can opt out at any point. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

This information leaflet was reproduced with the permission of Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust Oral Medicine Department.

Further information

Oral Medicine Department

The department is open Monday to Friday

9.00 am to 5.00 pm.

Tel: 0151 706 5060

Text phone number: 18001 0151 706 5060

Author: Department of Oral Medicine

Review date: September 2028

All Trust approved information is available on request in alternative formats, including other languages, easy read, large print, audio, Braille, moon and electronically.

يمكن توفير جميع المعلومات المتعلقة بالمرضى الموافق عليهم من قبل ائتمان المستشفى عند الطلب بصيغ أخرى، بما في ذلك لغات أخرى وبطرق تسهل قراءتها وبالحروف الطباعة الكبيرة وبالصوت وبطريقة برايل للمكفوفين وبطريقة مون والإلكترونية.

所有經信托基金批准的患者資訊均可以其它格式提供，包括其它語言、易讀閱讀軟件、大字

體、音頻、盲文、穆恩體 (Moon) 盲文和電子格式，敬請索取。

در صورت تمایل میتوانید کلیه اطلاعات تصویب شده توسط اتحادیه در رابطه با بیماران را به اشکال مختلف در دسترس داشته باشید، از جمله به زبانهای دیگر، به زبان ساده، چاپ درشت، صوت، خط مخصوص کوران، مون و بصورت روی خطی موجود است.

زانیاری پینوندیدار بهو نهخوشانهی له لایین تراستهوه پسهسد کران، نهگمر داوا بکرت له فورماتیکانی تردا بریتی له زمانهکانی تر، نیزی رید (هاسان خویندنهوه)، چاپی گهوره، شریتی دهنگ، هیلی موون و نهلیکترونیکی هیه.

所有经信托基金批准的患者信息均可以其它格式提供，包括其它语言、易读阅读软件、大字体、音频、盲文、穆恩体 (Moon) 盲文和电子格式，敬请索取。

Dhammaan warbixinta bukaanleyda ee Ururka ee la oggol yahay waxaa marka la codsado lagu heli karaa nuskhado kale, sida luqado kale, akhris fudud, far waaweyn, dhegeysi, farta braille ee dadka indhaha la', Moon iyo nidaam eletaroonig ah.