

Amitriptyline

This leaflet tells you about Amytriptyline. It explains what is involved, and the common complications associated with this medication. It is not meant to replace discussion between you and your doctor, but as a guide to be used in connection to what is discussed with your doctor.

What is Amitriptyline?

Amytriptyline is a medicine used to treat pain from damaged or sensitive nerves.

Amytriptyline helps a lot of people with this kind of pain, but does not help everyone. Some people feel no benefit and other people have side effects that make it difficult to use the medicine.

Apart from treating the pain, it improves sleep.

Dosage

We usually start with one tablet (10 mg) at night. After two or three weeks you may be able to increase to two tablets at night. Depending on the response, the dose can be gradually incremented every week. The maximum dose is between 50 to 150 mg which will be determined by your age and other concurrent medical conditions. If you have side effects, then gradually reduce the dose; the right dose is the one that provides reasonable pain relief with minimal side-effects. .

You will need to take the amitriptyline every night. It can take some weeks to the difference. Unlike ordinary pain-killers, amitriptyline does not work very well if you only take it when the pain is bad – as required. You have to take it regularly.

Are there any side-effects?

Amytriptyline was previously used to treat depression, and is still called an antidepressant. It was discovered that it also helped some kinds of pain, particularly when the common pain-killers had failed.

We are using it to treat pain. The doses that we use are too small to have an effect on depression. We are not using the medicine to change the way that you feel, except that we hope that you will feel better because of an improvement in your pain.

Amitriptyline may cause side-effects. The main side effects are **sleepiness**, less often a **dry sensation** around the mouth and eyes that can be accompanied by blurred eyesight, and sometimes **faintness**. Rare side-effects are described in the leaflet that comes with your tablets.

Although side-effects are common when you start, and when you increase the dose, in general, it settles in few weeks time. If not, then you have to reduce the dose, or stop the medicine altogether if there is no change in the pain. Please tell us, and tell your general practitioner, if you do have to stop.