

Amitriptyline

Pain Management Patient Information Leaflet

Introduction

Welcome to The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust pain management service. This leaflet will provide you and your relatives with information about a medication called amitriptyline. It includes what it is for, how it is taken and its benefits and risks.

This leaflet is not meant to replace discussion between you and your doctor, but as a guide to be used in conjunction with what is discussed.

What is amitriptyline?

It is a medicine used to treat many types of persistent pain. It works by dampening down nerve signals. In some types of pain, the nerves can fire off too many signals.

Amitriptyline was first used to treat depression and it is still used as an antidepressant. It was found that it also helped some kinds of pain, particularly when the common painkillers had failed.

It helps a lot of people with persistent pain but not everyone. Some people may feel no benefit and others can have side effects that make it difficult to use the medicine.

Why am I having amitriptyline?

In your case, we are using it to treat pain. The doses we use are much smaller than those used to treat depression. We are not using the medicine to change your mood. However, we hope that you will feel better because of an improvement in your pain.

What are the benefits?

It can help relieve pain if you have:

- pain caused from damaged or sensitive nerves
- pain that keeps you awake at night

What are the risks?

Amitriptyline can cause side effects. If these are a problem for you, you may have to stop taking the medicine.

Side effects are common when you start, and when you increase the dose. If these do not settle in two to three days, you may need a reduced dose, or you may have to stop altogether if there is no change in your pain. Please tell us and your GP if you do have to stop taking it.

The main side effects are:

- **Sleepiness.**
- Less often, people get a **dry sensation** around their mouth and eyes. Sometimes this can be accompanied by blurred eyesight.
- Sometimes **faintness**. The faintness can be worse if you are taking medicine for heart problems or high blood pressure. It is usually safe to take the amitriptyline even when you take these other medicines, but check this with your GP.

Rare side effects are described in the leaflet that comes with the medication.

Important: do not drive or operate heavy machinery if you feel drowsy.

How do I take it?

You will usually start with one tablet at night, taken when you go to bed. After two or three weeks, you may be able to increase to two tablets at night. If you have side effects, go back to one tablet at night.

You will need to take the amitriptyline every night, and keep on taking it. **It can take two weeks or more to feel if it is working.**

If the amitriptyline helps, you will need to keep taking it. It is not like an ordinary painkiller, and does not work very well if you only take it when the pain is bad. If there is no improvement in your pain, do not stop taking it suddenly but speak to your GP for advice.

When you need more tablets, you will need to get them from your GP.

What if I have problems?

You can contact the clinical nurse specialists in the pain management team (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday) by:

- Calling **01384 244735** and leaving a message on the answerphone or
- Ringing the switchboard number 01384 456111 and asking them to bleep the number 5064

Out of these hours, you will need to contact your GP or NHS 111.

Can I find out more?

The following website has more information about managing pain:

British Pain Society

<https://www.britishpainsociety.org/british-pain-society-publications/patient-publications/>

The following website has information about medications and driving:

www.gov.uk/drug-driving-law

Russells Hall Hospital switchboard number: 01384 456111

This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:

<http://dgft.nhs.uk/services-and-wards/pain-management/>

If you have any feedback on this patient information leaflet, please email dgft.patient.information@nhs.net

This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 073 0510.

للحصول على هذه النشرة بحجم أكبر، وعلى شكل إصدار صوتي و بلغات أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال بالرقم 08000730510.

此宣传单可提供大字版本、音频版本和其它语言版本，请拨打电话：0800 073 0510。

Ulotka dostępna jest również w dużym druku, wersji audio lub w innym języku. W tym celu zadzwoń pod numer 0800 073 0510.

ਇਹ ਪਰਚਾ ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ, ਬੋਲ ਕੇ ਰੀਕਾਰਡ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਅਤੇ ਦੂਸਰੀਆਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ, 0800 073 0510 ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜੀ।

Aceasta broșura poate fi pusă la dispoziție tipărită cu caractere mari, versiune audio sau în alte limbi, pentru acest lucru va rugăm sunați la 0800 073 0510.

یہ کتابچہ آپ کو بڑے حروف کی لکھائی، سمعی صورت اور دیگر زبانوں میں مہیا کیا جا سکتا ہے۔ برائے مہربانی فون نمبر 08000730510 پر رابطہ کریں۔