

Service: **Pain Clinic**

Amitriptyline



What is it?

It is a medication that is used in management of long term (chronic) pain, especially nerve pain. It can also be used for improving sleep. It is prescribed in low doses for managing pain and is not addictive. It is classed as an anti depressant but in the pain clinic we use it specifically for managing pain.

How does it work?

It works by damping down the nerve signals. In some forms of pain the nerves can fire off excessive signals. It works better if taken regularly. It can take up to 4 weeks to have any effect on your pain and up to 6 weeks to get the effect, so you need to be patient. However improvement in sleep occurs much faster.

When do I take them?

It should be taken at night, about an hour or two before you go to bed.

How will I feel?

You may feel sleepy or dizzy in the morning at first, but this usually fades within a few days, so persevere.

How much will I need?

The effective dose varies from person to person. We would generally start you with one tablet (10mg) at night. We may ask you to increase this dose by 10mg every week. Most patients find that a dose of 20 to 30mg is about right for them. You should notice an improvement in your pain in 6 weeks.

How long do I need to take the tablets?

We would recommend an initial trial of at least 6 weeks, though you may stop taking them earlier if the side effects become intolerable. If the treatment helps you may need to take it for 6 months or longer.

Are there any side effects?

- Feeling drowsy in the morning.
- Dry mouth.
- Blurred vision.
- Constipation.
- Palpitations (this is rare and but can occur in people with heart conditions).

If you experience any other side effects which you think may be from this medication, please discuss this with your doctor or pharmacist.

Dosing schedule for Amitriptyline:

If you are prescribed Amitriptyline for your pain and have been advised to increase the dose slowly, please follow the steps below:

Start taking amitriptyline at a dose of 10 mg every night for 1 week.

Increase this to 20 mg at night during the week 2.

Continue increasing the dose by 10 mg on a weekly basis to a maximum of 50 mg every night.

(Do not go above 50 mg dose per night).

| | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat | Sun |
|--------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Week 1 | 10mg |
| Week 2 | 20mg |
| Week 3 | 30mg |
| Week 4 | 40mg |
| Week 5 | 50mg |

From week 6 onwards continue at 50 mgs every night.

If you experience excessive dizziness, drowsiness or sleepiness at any stage, do not increase the dose further. Most patients overcome these side effects within a few days.

If you wish to stop taking amitriptyline because of side effects, do not stop it suddenly - reduce the dose slowly and stop it over a period of a few days.

Is it safe to take this with other medications or pain killers?

Low dose amitriptyline is generally safe. If you take any blood thinning medication such as:- Warfarin, Clopidogrel, Rivaroxaban, Dipyridamole, Dabigatran it is very important you let the pain consultant know. Please note this list is not exhaustive.

Is there any thing else I should know about amitriptyline?

Amitriptyline is dangerous if taken in overdose. Please keep it away from children.

References

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NHS Constitution. Information on your rights and responsibilities. Available at www.nhs.uk/aboutnhs/constitution

**PATIENT
APPROVED** 

How to contact us:

 **Pain Clinic
Gloucester House
Southmead Hospital
Westbury-on-Trym
Bristol
BS10 5NB**

 **0117 4147361**

 **PainClinicClinical@nbt.nhs.uk**

 **www.nbt.nhs.uk/painclinic**

If you or the individual you are caring for need support reading this leaflet please ask a member of staff for advice.

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