

# Amytriptyline

You have been prescribed Amitriptyline because you have 'tension type headache' or what is known as 'midfacial segment pain'.

## What is Amitriptyline?

Amitriptyline is a tricyclic antidepressant that has been used by doctors for many years to treat a range of disorders that vary from bedwetting to depression. Whilst it is an antidepressant it is not being given to you to treat depression. For most conditions such as depression Amitriptyline is given in doses that range from 75 to 100 milligrams however, for your particular condition, a much smaller dose of 10 to 20 milligrams is often adequate to relieve symptoms. There are very few other antidepressants that have been found to help in tension type headache or midfacial segment pain.

## What are the side effects?

Amitriptyline often takes 6 to 8 weeks to work. In the first week it is common to notice some drowsiness and a dry mouth. These side effects almost always go to a large extent after one week and most people notice very few side effects. It is best to take the tablets in the evening so that most of the drowsiness happens when you are asleep. You might want to start taking them on a Friday night before a weekend to be sure that the drowsiness doesn't disturb your routine. Be careful drinking alcohol with Amitriptyline as one drink will have the effect of two. If you are taking other tablets check with your doctor that it is safe to take these at the same time.

You will normally be started on 10 milligrams at night for 8 weeks. If you feel that this has only had partial or no effect on your symptoms of pain or pressure then you can increase the dose to 20 milligrams at night for 2 weeks. It is unusual to need a higher dose but if you are still getting some breakthrough symptoms you can increase the dose by 10 milligrams every 2 weeks up to 100 milligrams. Other side effects are not common but can include a feeling of being 'hung over' or not 'with it' and these usually go within a week.

- Palpitations
- Passing water
- Constipation

Amitriptyline is not addictive so please do not worry that you will become dependant on it. Patients usually need to take Amitriptyline for 6 months before they can stop taking it without the symptoms returning. Occasionally, even after 6 months, the symptoms return. If this happens to you, you may need to take it for a year or more. This ongoing use of Amitriptyline will not harm you, it is just an inconvenience. Although side effects are not common at the low dose required for your condition, please consult your doctor if you notice any other side effects.