

Medication: Amitriptyline 10 mg

What is Amitriptyline?

Amitriptyline belongs to a group of medications called **tricyclic antidepressants (TCAs)**. TCA's were first used to treat depression and work by altering the levels of certain neuro-transmitters, such as noradrenalin and serotonin in the brain. They have since been found to be effective for many different conditions such as pain, helping with sleep quality (although it is not a sleeping pill), irritable bowel syndrome (with diarrhea), migraine prevention, and interstitial cystitis.

Expected Benefit:

- Usually takes several weeks to notice a benefit
- Benefit may not be noticeable until the dose reaches 25 mg

Watch for possible side effects:

It is important to be aware of the side effects however, it is also important to remember that not all side effects occur in everyone. Many of the less serious side effects will improve over the first few days of taking the medication.

If you have problems with these side effects talk with your doctor or pharmacist:

- Dry mouth – this is the most common side; the others are much less frequent
- Hangover effect – too sleepy in the morning
- Blurred vision
- Urinary retention, trouble with urination
- Tiredness, dizziness that is more than usual
- Diarrhea or constipation

Stopping the medication:

- Do **NOT** stop taking this medication suddenly without asking your doctor – this medication is usually decreased slowly (in particular at higher doses) before it is stopped completely, to prevent symptoms from returning.

How to use this medication:

- Take this medication with or without food

Dosing Schedule:

(Note: dose will depend in condition being treated as well as tolerance to side effects)

- Start with 5 mg (½ tablet) 2 hrs before bed
- Increase dose according to table below
- Many patients can only tolerate 20 or 30 mg
- If you don't have dry mouth or side effects, you can continue slowly increasing the dose to a maximum of 70 mg

- You can stay at a lower dose (stop increasing) if you get side effects (usually dry mouth). If this happens, you might want to lower the dose by 5 mg.

Take 2 hrs before bed	
5 mg	For 1 week
10 mg	For 2 weeks
15 mg	For 2 weeks
20 mg	For 2 weeks
25 mg	For 2 weeks
30 mg	For 2 weeks
<i>Most patients can't tolerate more than 20-30 mg</i>	
35 mg	For 2 weeks
40 mg	For 2 weeks
45 mg	For 2 weeks
50 mg	For 2 weeks
55 mg	For 2 weeks
60 mg	For 2 weeks
65 mg	For 2 weeks
70 mg	Stay at this dose
Follow up with clinic before increasing the dose	

Drugs and Foods to Avoid:

Ask your doctor or pharmacist before using any other medication, including non-prescription medication (over-the-counter medication) and herbal products.

- Avoid alcohol use at the same time
- Take 2 hours after potassium,
- Don't use with yohimbine, St John's Wort, 5HTP, chamomile, ginseng, gotu kola, hawthorn, kava, lemon balm, goldenseal, passion flower, SAMe, valerian

Tips:

- If this medication upsets your stomach, try taking it with food
- This medication may make your skin sensitive to sunlight. Try to stay out of direct sunlight and wear protective clothing and a sun block with SPF 15 or higher
- If you experience dry mouth try chewing sugarless gum, taking sips of water or using a saliva substitute

Please contact the Complex Chronic Diseases Program if you have further questions about your medications.