

Medication: Nortriptyline 10 mg

What is Nortriptyline?

Nortriptyline belongs to a group of medications called **tricyclic antidepressants (TCAs)**. TCAs 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 20 – 30 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
- 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 10 mg, 2 hrs before bed
- Increase dose according to table below
- Stop increasing the dose
 - If you reach the target dose of 70 mg
 - You can stay at a lower dose (stop increasing) if you get side effects (usually dry mouth)

- Alternatively, lower the dose by 10 mg
- Many patients can only tolerate 20 – 30 mg

Take 2 hrs before bed	
1 tab (10 mg)	For 2 weeks
2 tab (20 mg)	For 2 weeks
3 tab (30 mg)	For 2 weeks
4 tab (40 mg)	For 2 weeks
5 tab (50 mg)	For 2 weeks
6 tab (60 mg)	For 2 weeks
7 tab (70 mg)	Stay at this 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 hrs after potassium,
- Avoid 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

Over the counter and herbal interactions:

- Avoid NSAIDS (e.g., ibuprofen), ASA,
- Take 2 hrs after potassium,
- Avoid alcohol use
- Don't use yohimbine, St John's Wort, 5HTP, chamomile, ginseng, gotu kola, hawthorn, kava, lemon balm, goldenseal, passion flower, SAME, valerian

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