

COMPLEX CHRONIC DISEASES PROGRAM

Medication Handout

Date: May 15 2018

Medication: Doxepin 3 mg

What is Doxepin:

Doxepin belongs to a group of medications called tricyclic antidepressants (TCAs) that were first made to treat depression. It works by altering the levels of certain neurotransmitters in the brain such as noradrenaline and serotonin. They have since been found to be effective for many different uses such as: pain, anxiety and helping with sleep maintenance (i.e. staying asleep).

Expected Benefit:

- You should notice a benefit on the first night

Watch for possible side effects:

This list of side effects is important for you to be aware of however, it is also important to remember that not all side effects happen to everyone.

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

- Hangover effect (drowsiness that continues after you get up)
- Dry mouth
- Dizziness
- Blurred vision
- Weight gain (rare at the small doses used for sleep)

Stopping the medication:

This medication should not be stopped abruptly. Your doctor may advise you to reduce the dose slowly to help prevent your symptoms from returning.

How to use this medication:

- Take this medication with or without food

Dosing Schedule:

- Take **2 hours before bed**
 - Or 10 – 12 hours before you want to get up
- Start with 3 mg 2 hours before bed
- Increase the dose to 6 mg if you are still having problems staying asleep
- Watch for a hangover effect
 - Do not continue increasing the dose if you get a hangover effect
- The usual dose range is 3 – 6 mg 2 hours before bedtime
- If you are still having problems with *falling* asleep, you may need two different medications to address these problems

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, or magnesium supplements
- Avoid St John's Wort, Kava Kava

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 at if you have further questions about your medications.