

Treatment Information

Amitriptyline

Low Dose Anti depressants for treatment of pain

When pain goes on for a long time it can interfere with your sleep pattern so that you no longer wake feeling refreshed. This in turn can make it more difficult to cope with pain so that your pain threshold drops and sleep is disturbed further. This vicious cycle can eventually lead to a state where sleep is poor and pain is badly controlled.

How can Antidepressants help?

Antidepressants help to improve your sleep pattern and this makes the pain easier to manage. This can take time and you will need to take the tablets for at least 6 weeks before you notice any improvement.

How do I take the tablets?

Amitriptyline tablets come in doses of 10mg, 25mg, 50mg and 75mg. Dothiepin comes in doses of 25mg and 75mg. Low doses of antidepressants are usually used to control pain. Your rheumatology doctor or Rheumatology Practitioner will advise you about the dose that is prescribed for you. Sometimes the dose will need to be adjusted to find the right level for you. You should take the tablets in the evening, twelve hours before you want to get up in the morning.

Are there any side effects?

As with all medication, some people may experience side effects. For amitriptyline these may include:

Drowsiness	Nausea	Constipation
Blurred vision	Dry mouth	

These tend to improve over the first few weeks.

Why use anti-depressant for pain?

Low doses of some antidepressants are also used to relieve depression but usually higher doses are needed. Remember that the aim of using low dose antidepressants in your case is to establish a better sleeping pattern and so relieve pain. We use much lower doses for this.

There is **no** possibility that you will become addicted to the tablets. If they are helpful you will probably continue them for about 6 months and then slowly reduce them as advised by your doctor.

Rheumatology department Patient Information

Are there any precautions I will need to take?

Alcohol will increase the effect of low dose antidepressants so you should restrict your intake of alcohol while you are on these tablets.

If you feel drowsy on these tablets you should avoid driving until the drowsiness wears off.

Contact Details

If you have any further questions or need advice about your treatment phone the Rheumatology Advice line on

01202 442849.

www.poole.nhs.uk/our_services/rheumatology.asp

For further health-related information, please contact:

The Health Information & Resource Centre

Poole Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Longfleet Road

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Telephone: (01202) 448003

Rheumatology Practitioners

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We can supply this information in larger print, on audiotape, or have it translated for you. A member of staff will be happy to discuss this with you. Please call PALS on 01202 448499 or the Health Information Centre on 01202 448003 for further advice