

## How to start taking your Amitriptyline

	Dose (Number of tablets) Evening
Step 1	10mg (1)
Step 2	20mg (2)
Step 3	30mg (3)
Step 4	40mg (4)
Step 5	50mg (5)

Each step lasts ..... days

### What if I have problems?

Discuss any problems with your GP or alternatively, your community pharmacist may be able to help.

Please ensure you store your medicines safely.

This leaflet does not contain all the information about Amitriptyline.

Please read the manufacturer's patient information leaflet enclosed with your medicine.

Leaflet adapted with permission from the Pain Management Service, Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

Medicines Management, NHS Wiltshire CCG  
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# Amitriptyline

## Information and Advice for Patients with Chronic Pain

### **What is Amitriptyline?**

Amitriptyline is an example of a drug belonging to a group known as the tricyclic antidepressants. It is used in the treatment of certain long-lasting painful conditions and in the treatment of depression.

### **Why am I being asked to take Amitriptyline?**

Amitriptyline helps to reduce the amount of pain signals that reach the brain by acting on nerve pathways in the spinal cord. In this way it can reduce the amount of pain you feel. Amitriptyline can improve sleep and so gives you a better night's rest. Amitriptyline is a strong antidepressant at high doses. You may need to take it for several months or more.

### **How will I know that it is working?**

You will feel less pain and enjoy a better night's sleep. If you have been feeling depressed and you are taking higher doses of the drug, your mood may begin to improve after about three weeks.

### **What are the likely side-effects?**

All medicines have side-effects. Amitriptyline has a number of side-effects that you may feel to some degree.

Some of the more common ones are:

- Sleepiness
- Dry mouth
- Blurred vision
- Constipation
- Weight gain
- Interference with sexual function
- Palpitations
- Sweating

### **What can I do about the side-effects?**

Your dose of Amitriptyline will be started at a low level and will build up gradually over days and weeks. Should you have any troublesome side-effects stay on a low dose for a few more days before starting to build it up again. This reduces the side-effects and makes it possible for you to carry on with the treatment.

**You should stop taking the medicine and see your doctor should you experience any of the following:**

- Fluttering feeling in your chest
- Sore throat or fever
- Have trouble passing water
- Feeling very confused or agitated
- Jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes)

### **What about driving?**

Amitriptyline will slow your reaction time, especially if you are taking a high dose. Don't drive or operate dangerous machinery when you are starting the medication, increasing the dose or at any time if you feel drowsy.

### **Can I drink alcohol?**

No. You are advised not to drink alcohol while you are taking Amitriptyline.

### **How do I take Amitriptyline?**

The tablets are best taken at night about one hour before you wish to go to sleep. If you are still feeling sleepy in the morning, try taking Amitriptyline a little earlier in the evening. See the table overleaf for how to increase the dose of your amitriptyline.