

## INFORMATION TO PATIENTS

### Commonly prescribed medications for the treatment of headache disorders

## AMITRIPTYLINE

### Introduction

The aim of this leaflet is to provide information on the use of amitriptyline for the prevention of migraine in children and adolescents. Further information on amitriptyline can be found in the patient information leaflet supplied with the tablets or from your doctor or pharmacist. Please read the information before taking medication.

### What is amitriptyline?

Amitriptyline is a tricyclic antidepressant drug used in the past as a treatment for depression. However, its main use currently is to treat pain, in general, and migraine in particular. Amitriptyline is NOT a pain killer and should not be taken to relieve pain during an attack, but it works as a pain modulating agent that helps in reducing frequency and severity of migraine when taken regularly over a period of time.

Amitriptyline is not licensed in the UK for treatment of migraine, but its use is recommended by The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). Research in children showed that it can be effective in reducing severity and frequency of attacks of migraine in children and adolescents when used in a dose of 0.25-1.0 mg/kg/day. However as there is a high placebo effect in the treatment of migraine in children the benefit of amitriptyline can be underestimated.

### What is the dose of amitriptyline?

The starting dose for the prevention of migraine is 10mg at night. If you have no side effects after the first week, the dose can be increased gradually for a maximum of 1 mg/kg/day. It takes as long as 8 weeks before you will be able to tell if it is working. If treatment is successful, it should continue for 6-12 months before considering stopping it.

### Does amitriptyline have any side effects?

Like many medicines, amitriptyline may cause side effects in some patients, particularly when you first start taking it. The most common side effects include: Dry mouth, increased appetite, constipation, blurred vision, dizziness, tiredness or sleepiness.

### Precautions:

Amitriptyline may impair your alertness. Make sure you are not affected before you drive or operate machinery. Avoid drinking alcohol with this medicine.

You must not take amitriptyline if:

- you are sensitive to amitriptyline or any of the ingredients in the product.
- you have heart condition.
- you suffer from periods of increased and exaggerated behaviour (mania).
- you have liver disease.
- you are taking other medicines to treat depression
- You should not take amitriptyline if you are pregnant, planning a pregnancy or breastfeeding.

### What if I need to stop taking the medicine?

If you need to stop your medication, the dose should be reduced gradually. If your medicine is stopped too quickly you may suffer from feeling or being sick, headaches, sleep disturbances, irritability and restlessness. Always follow your doctor's instructions on how you should stop taking this medicine.