



Amitriptyline and Nortriptyline

Amitriptyline (Elavil and other name products) and nortriptyline (Pamelor, Aventyl) are in a class of medicines called tricyclic antidepressants. Amitriptyline and nortriptyline act to block reabsorption of neurotransmitters (chemicals that transmit nerve messages in the brain).

Amitriptyline and nortriptyline are a medication used to treat various forms of depression, pain associated with the nerves (neuropathic pain), and to prevent migraine conditions. This medicine, usually given at bedtime, also helps patients sleep better.

Dosing

Your doctor will likely prescribe low doses.

Amitriptyline and nortriptyline come as a capsule. For migraine conditions, they are usually taken only once (10-25 mg) - often at bedtime- or twice a day. They may be taken with or without food.

It may take a few weeks or longer before you feel the full benefit of amitriptyline or nortriptyline. Your doctor will need to check you at regular visits for at least the first 12 weeks of treatment. Continue to take amitriptyline or nortriptyline even if you feel well. Do not stop taking amitriptyline or nortriptyline without talking to your doctor. If you suddenly stop taking amitriptyline or nortriptyline, you may experience withdrawal symptoms such as nausea, headache, and lack of energy. Your doctor will probably decrease your dose gradually.

Warnings

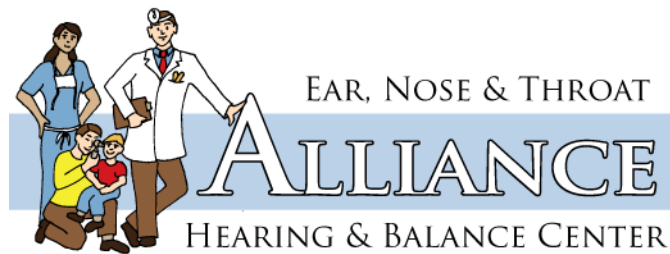
Do not use this medication if you...

- are [allergic](#) to amitriptyline or nortriptyline
- have recently had a heart attack
- have thoughts about suicide, especially if you are younger than 24 years old.

Patients with glaucoma, seizures, urinary retention, overactive thyroid, poor liver or kidney function, alcoholism, asthma, digestive disorders, enlarged prostate, seizures, or heart disease need to use with caution.

While taking amitriptyline or nortriptyline,

- Avoid drinking alcohol.
- Avoid grapefruit and grapefruit juice
- Be careful if you drive or do anything that requires you to be awake and alert.
- Avoid exposure to sunlight or artificial UV rays (sunlamps or tanning beds). Use a sunscreen (minimum SPF 15) and wear protective clothing if you must be out in the sun.



Drug Interactions

- cisapride (Propulsid)
- MAO inhibitor – another group of antidepressants such as isocarboxazid (Marplan), phenelzine (Nardil), rasagiline (Azilect), selegiline (Eldepryl, Emsam) or tranylcypromine (Parnate)
- Tagamet (cimetidine)
- Neosynephrine
- dietary supplements St. John's wort, belladonna, henbane and scopolia
- Black tea may decrease the absorption of this drug. Patients should ingest the drug and tea at least two hours apart.

Common side effects

- dry mouth – patients can suck on an ice cube or sugarless candy
- drowsiness
- constipation- Increased fiber in the diet and additional fluids may help
- dizziness or lightheadedness when standing. Dizziness is usually caused by a drop in blood pressure when suddenly changing position. Patients should slowly rise from a sitting or lying position if dizziness is noticed. Amitriptyline may increase the risk of falls in older adults.

Less common side effects

- increase appetite and cause weight gain
- produce an unpleasant taste in the mouth
- cause diarrhea, vomiting, or heartburn. Taking this medication with food may decrease digestive side effects
- muscle tremors, nervousness, impaired sexual function, sweating, rash, itching, hair loss, ringing in the ears or changes in the makeup of the patient's blood.

Call your doctor at once if you have any new or worsening symptoms such as: mood or behavior changes, anxiety, panic attacks, [trouble sleeping](#) or if you feel impulsive, irritable, agitated, hostile, aggressive, restless, hyperactive (mentally or physically)

Pregnancy and Breast Feeding

Avoid this medicine.