

# Amitriptyline and nortriptyline

## What are amitriptyline and nortriptyline?

Amitriptyline and nortriptyline belong to a group of medications called tricyclic antidepressants. The body converts amitriptyline to nortriptyline therefore the effects are similar. It is only available with a doctor's prescription.

## What are they for?

They are used to treat several conditions including depression and pain control.

## How to take this medication

It is important that these medications are taken only as directed and not given to other people.

Most antidepressant medications take time to work, so don't be discouraged if the medication has not worked immediately. For the treatment of depression, it may take up to six weeks before improvement is noticed.

Effects may be seen within 3 to 7 days when used for pain management.

It does not matter whether these medications are given with food or on an empty stomach. Tablets may be crushed for swallowing.

## What to do if a dose is missed

If it is almost time for the next dose, skip the dose missed and give the next dose at the usual time. Otherwise, give the medication as soon as you remember and then go back to giving the medicine as usual.

## Storing the medication

Store **below 30°C** in a cool dry place away from moisture, heat or sunlight.

It is important to keep amitriptyline and nortriptyline locked away out of the reach of children.

Do not keep the tablets in the bathroom, near the kitchen sink or in other damp, warm places because this may make them less effective. Always keep them in the original foil strips.

## Use of other medication

Care must be taken when using amitriptyline and nortriptyline with some other medications. Check with your doctor or pharmacist before giving any other medicines, especially those that you buy without prescription from a pharmacy, supermarket or health food shop. This is particularly important with some cold and flu preparations.



## Important information

Do not suddenly stop giving this medication without first checking with your doctor. The medication should be ceased gradually.

These medications may make your child sleepy or dizzy. Care must be taken with activities such as riding bikes or climbing trees, until you know how this medicine will affect your child.

## Possible side-effects

Side effects can occur while taking amitriptyline or nortriptyline. Some of these are not serious and will go away with time or after the dose has been changed. Others are more serious and require you to check with your doctor.

Less serious side effects include:

- drowsiness
- dry mouth
- blurred vision or difficulty focusing
- constipation
- nausea and vomiting
- weight gain.

Contact your child's doctor **as soon as possible** if any of the following side effects occur:

- fainting, falls or dizziness
- fast or irregular heartbeat or chest pain
- seizures or fits
- difficulty passing urine
- tingling or numbness of hands and feet
- allergic reaction with swelling of the face or tongue, difficulty swallowing and breathing
- mood changes
- hallucinations
- frequent infections such as fever, severe temperatures, sore throat or mouth ulcers
- bruising more than normal
- yellowing of skin and eyes (jaundice)
- skin rash.

If you are worried about any of these or notice any other effects, please contact your child's doctor.

## Dosage forms and strengths

- Amitriptyline tablets 10mg, 25mg and 50mg (Endep®, Entrip®)
- Nortriptyline tablets 10mg and 25mg (Allegron®, NortriTABS®)

Your hospital pharmacy will advise you if they manufacture any additional dosage forms to the above.

If you have any concerns, contact your child's doctor or the PCH Pharmacy Department.

- Dispensary: 6456 0190 – select option 2
- Paediatric Medicines Information Service: 6456 0190 – select option 1

**In case of overdose or poisoning contact the Poisons Information Centre on 13 11 26.**



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