

If you have problems with these less serious side effects, talk with your doctor or pharmacist:

- ▶ Nervousness, trouble sleeping
- ▶ Tiredness, dizziness
- ▶ Blurred vision
- ▶ Stomach upset
- ▶ Trouble with urination
- ▶ Diarrhea or constipation
- ▶ Dry mouth
- ▶ Weight changes

Call your doctor right away if you have any of these side effects:

- ▶ Confusion, agitation, hallucinations
- ▶ Seizures
- ▶ Fainting
- ▶ Fast or irregular heartbeat
- ▶ Muscle stiffness
- ▶ Shortness of breath or trouble breathing
- ▶ Skin rash or hives

IF YOU HAVE ANY OTHER SIDE EFFECTS THAT YOU THINK ARE CAUSED BY THIS MEDICATION, TELL YOUR DOCTOR OR PHARMACIST.

- ▶ If this medication upsets your stomach, try taking it with food.
- ▶ This medication may make your skin more sensitive to sunlight. Try to stay out of direct sunlight and wear protective clothing and a sun block with SPF 15 or higher.
- ▶ If you experience dry mouth try chewing sugarless gum, taking sips of water or using a saliva substitute.

Please contact the Integrated Pain Service at 604-875-2345 ext 5108 (toll-free within BC: 1-888-3088 ext 5108) if you have further questions about your pain medication.

Developed by the health care professionals of the Integrated Pain Service with assistance from the Department of Learning & Development

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BC Children's Hospital**

Integrated Pain Service

Tricyclic Antidepressants (TCAs)



An agency of the Provincial
Health Services Authority

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Integrated Pain Service

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Toll-free within BC: 1-888-300-3088 ext. 5108**

**Fax: 604-875-2767
Toll-free: 1-888-300-2767**

Email: IPS@phsa.ca

Tricyclic Antidepressants (TCAs)

- ▶ Amitriptyline (Elavil®, Apo-amitriptyline®)
- ▶ Nortriptyline (Aventyl®, other)
- ▶ Imipramine (Impril®, Apo-imipramine®)
- ▶ Doxepin (Triadapin®, Novo-Doxepin®)
- ▶ Trimipramine (Rhotrimine®, Apo-Trimip®)
- ▶ Clomipramine (Anafranil®)
- ▶ Desipramine (Norpramin®)

WHAT ARE TCAs?

This group of medications was first made to treat depression. Tricyclic antidepressants (TCAs) have since been found to be effective for many types of pain, including headache pain, nerve pain and other chronic pain conditions. When used for pain, the TCA doses are lower than those used for depression. We know that this group of medications works by altering the levels of certain transmitters in the brain (eg. noradrenalin, serotonin). TCAs may be used alone or in combination with other medications.

You should take this medication regularly to prevent or reduce the pain. It may take several weeks before you start to feel better.

HOW TO USE AND STORE THIS MEDICATION:

- ▶ Take this medication with or without food.
- ▶ If you take only one dose a day, take it at bedtime.
- ▶ Store the medication out of reach of children.
- ▶ Store the medication at room temperature away from heat, moisture and direct light.

IF YOU MISS A DOSE:

- ▶ If you miss a dose or forget to take your medication, take it as soon as you remember. However, if it is almost time for your next dose, do not take the missed dose or double your next dose. Instead, continue your regular dosing schedule. If you are unsure what to do about a missed dose, contact your doctor or pharmacist.
- ▶ If you take only one dose at bedtime and you miss the dose, do not take the medication in the morning. Wait until the next night.
- ▶ Do **NOT** take extra medication to make up for a missed dose.

DRUGS AND FOOD TO AVOID:

- ▶ Ask your doctor or pharmacist before using any other medication, including non-prescription medications, vitamins and herbal products.

WARNINGS:

- ▶ Make sure your doctor knows if you are pregnant or breastfeeding, or if you have kidney, liver or heart disease, glaucoma or seizures.
- ▶ Do **NOT** stop taking this medication suddenly without asking your doctor – this medication is usually decreased slowly before it is stopped completely.
- ▶ This medication may make you dizzy or drowsy. Avoid driving or doing anything dangerous until you know how this medication makes you feel.

SIDE EFFECTS:

This list of side effects is important for you to be aware of; however, it is also important to remember that not all side effects happen to all people.

These are some less serious side effects of taking TCAs. Many of these less serious side effects will improve over the first few days of taking the medication.