

***About your medication***

**AMITRIPTYLINE**

(Endep®)

*Other brands may be available*

**OR**

**NORTRIPTYLINE**

(Allegron®)

*Other brands may be available*

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## WHAT ARE AMITRIPTYLINE and NORTRIPTYLINE?

Amitriptyline and Nortriptyline are from a group of medicines called tricyclic antidepressants. The body converts amitriptyline to nortriptyline, therefore the effects of both medicines are similar. Tricyclic antidepressants are thought to work by correcting imbalances of certain chemicals in the brain. They are only available on a doctor's prescription.

## WHAT IS IT FOR?

They are used to treat conditions such as pain associated with nerve damage (neuropathic pain), night-time bed wetting, and rarely, depression. There may be other reasons this medicine is being prescribed – please ask if you do not know why amitriptyline or nortriptyline is being used.

## HOW TO TAKE THIS MEDICINE

It is important that this medicine is given only as directed and not given to other people. The dose varies for each person. Contact your pharmacist if you have trouble taking or giving this medicine to your child.

- It does not matter whether these medicines are given with food or on an empty stomach.
- It is best to give your child their medication at about the same time each day, whether they are having a single daily dose or multiple doses through the day.
- If being used for depression or nerve pain, the dose of amitriptyline or nortriptyline is usually started low and gradually increased by your child's doctor as necessary to control symptoms.
- If being used for depression, most antidepressant medications take time to work, so don't be discouraged if the amitriptyline or nortriptyline seems not to be working immediately. It may take up to 6 weeks before improvement in mood is noticed. If being used for pain control, an effect can be seen within 3-7 days.
- Tablets may be crushed for swallowing if required.
- As for all medicines, it is best to swallow the tablets with plenty of water.
- These medications may increase the effects of alcohol – take care when purchasing over-the-counter medications such as cough and cold preparations as these may contain alcohol.

## WHAT TO DO IF A DOSE IS MISSED

If you miss a dose of the medication it can be taken as soon as you remember. Do not give the missed dose if it is almost time for the next dose. Skip the dose and wait to give the next dose as normal. **Do not double-up on any doses.**

## STORING THE MEDICINE

It is important to keep amitriptyline or 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. Store in a cool, dry place, away from heat and direct light.

## USE OF OTHER MEDICINES

Care must be taken when using amitriptyline/nortriptyline with some other medications. Check with your doctor or pharmacist before giving any prescription medicine or medicine purchased without prescription from a pharmacy, supermarket, or health food shop. Examples of medicines that may affect how well amitriptyline or nortriptyline work include:

- Other antidepressant medications - check with your doctor or pharmacist before changing antidepressant medications as a period of no medication may be required before commencing the new treatment.
- Medicines that can affect serotonin levels e.g. tramadol, dextromethorphan, and anti-migraine medicines such as sumatriptan, naratriptan, zolmitriptan.

Increased risk of side effects can also occur if amitriptyline/nortriptyline are used with other sedative agents or agents that can affect the rhythm of the heart.

This list is not complete. Talk to your child's doctor or pharmacist about possible interactions with any over-the-counter or complementary medicines or recreational substances (e.g. alcohol)

### **IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

- These medications may make you/your child sleepy or dizzy. Care must be taken with activities such as riding bikes or climbing trees, or for older children, driving cars or boats or operating machinery, until you know how the medicine will affect you/your child.
- Talk to your healthcare provider before taking this medicine if you/your child has any other conditions that may mean this medicine should not be used, e.g. epilepsy, liver failure, or heart disease.
- Amitriptyline can make some people more sensitive to sunlight. Wear protective clothing and use sunscreen when outdoors.
- Do not suddenly stop giving this medication without first checking with your child's doctor. The medication should be ceased gradually rather than abruptly.

### **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
- Blurred vision
- Dry mouth
- Constipation

#### **More Serious** (Contact doctor *as soon as possible* if any of the following occur):

- Fainting, falls
- Irregular heart beat or chest pain
- Seizures or fits, tingling or numbness of hands and feet
- Difficulty passing urine
- Mood changes
- Frequent infections (recurrent fever, sore throat or mouth ulcers)

#### **Allergic reaction** (Stop medicine and see doctor immediately):

- Skin rash, itching or hives, swollen mouth or lips, wheezing or difficulty breathing

**IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS CONTACT**



***Your Child's Doctor via the RCH Switchboard on 03 9345 5522***

**OR**

***Pharmacy Department on 03 9345 5492***

***IN CASE OF POISONING OR OVERDOSE CONTACT***

***POISONS INFORMATION CENTRE 13 11 26 (24 hour service)***

This leaflet answers some common questions about your child's medicine. It does not contain all available information. It does not take the place of talking to your child's doctor or pharmacist. The leaflet may differ from information in the manufacturer's Consumer Medicine Information. The information in this leaflet reflects the usage of medicine under medical supervision by patients of The Royal Children's Hospital. Medicine may be used in children in different ways or for different reasons than in adults - for more information see the leaflet "[Medicines for Children](#)". This leaflet includes information current at the time of review of the document – OCTOBER 2010.

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