

Medication Information Sheet



Tapentadol

brands: Nucynta

Medications are only ONE part of a successful treatment plan. They are appropriate when they provide benefit, improve function and have either no or mild, manageable side effects. Importantly, medications (even if natural) are chemical substances not expected in the body, and as such have side effects. Some of the side effects might be unknown. The use of medications/drugs for any purpose requires patient consent. This practice does NOT require a patient to use any medication.

Information & potential benefits

Schedule II opioids are pain relievers that work on specific opioid pain receptors in the body. Opioids are believed to be the most effective pain killing medications. Alternatives include non-medication modalities, pain interventions and non-opioid medications. Schedule II opioids have the highest risk of abuse and addiction and the highest risk of fatal overdose. They cannot be refilled and cannot be called into a pharmacy. Tapentadol also has the effect of blocking the reuptake of norepinephrine like some anti-depressants; because of this it carries many of the benefits and side effects of opiates and anti-depressants. This medication is most useful in patients who have more than one kind of pain.

Potential risks and side effects

Common and basic side effects include nausea, dizziness, lightheadedness, fatigue, sweating, mental clouding, constipation, itching, and sexual problems. You should let your practitioner know if you experience any of these. Constipation may need continued attention. Diet is important: eating fruits and vegetables & drinking plenty of fluids also can help. In many cases a laxative regimen is required. **There is a risk of addiction with the use of controlled substances.** The risk appears low unless there is a family or personal history of addiction to drugs or alcohol. However, there is no guarantee that you will not become addicted. Opioid pain medications increase the risk of asthma attacks or other lung problems in patients with lung disease such as asthma. This potentially fatal effect can occur even in very low doses. All opioids are dangerous in persons with prostate problems, low blood pressure, head injury or increased intracranial pressure. Rare but serious side effects of opioid products include seizures, constipation requiring surgery, heart failure, and death. In the process of removing morphine from your body, the liver turns the morphine into other chemical compounds. Those other compounds are slowly removed from the body by the kidneys. In cases of kidney failure, the compounds are not removed from the body. Those morphine waste products can cause twitching, muscle jerks, swelling/edema, and/or confusion and such side effects can occur even in cases of normal kidney function. Do not stop this medication suddenly.

Dosing information

Tapentadol is a short acting medication and is prescribed to be taken as needed depending on the patient's pain. A limit would be placed by the provider on the total amount of medication consumed in a 24hour period to prevent overmedication.

Important information

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Medication Information Sheet



Stimulants

methylphenidate, amphetamine, dextroamphetamine, Ritalin, Adderall and others

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Information & potential benefits

Stimulants are a group of medications used to treat a wide variety of disorders. They are FDA approved for the treatment of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and narcolepsy (sudden and uncontrollable attacks of drowsiness and sleepiness). It is also used off label by providers to treat daytime drowsiness caused by shift-work or to fight the side effects of medications that cause drowsiness. One of the side effects of stimulants is weight loss and it can be used specifically for that side effect.

Potential risks and side effects

Common and basic side effects include constipation, diarrhea, difficulty sleeping, dizziness, dry mouth, headache, loss of appetite, nausea, nervousness, restlessness, stomach pain or upset, unpleasant taste, vomiting, weight loss. Seek health care immediately if you experience the following; severe allergic reactions (rash; hives; difficulty breathing; tightness in the chest; swelling of the mouth, face, lips, or tongue), blurred vision; chest pain, confusion, depression, fast or irregular heartbeat, fever, mental/mood changes, numbness or tingling in an arm or leg, one-sided weakness, painful or frequent urination, seizures, severe headache, severe stomach pain, severe weight loss, sudden severe dizziness, fainting, or vomiting, uncontrolled muscle movement, unusual weakness or tiredness, vision or speech changes. **Stimulants are a controlled substance and the potential for abuse and addiction exist.** The risk appears low unless there is a family or personal history of addiction to drugs or alcohol. However, there is no guarantee that you will not become addicted. Providers may want to check an EKG before starting this medication and periodically thereafter due to the potential for changes in the conduction of electricity through the heart.

Dosing information

The smallest dose that achieves relief should be used. These medications are started at a very low dose and gradually increased to achieve therapeutic effects and avoid side effects.

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Medication Information Sheet



Pregabalin

brands: Lyrica®

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Information & potential benefits

Pregabalin is a medication used to treat pain and seizures. It is FDA approved for fibromyalgia pain, two types of neuropathic pain (diabetic neuropathy and post-shingles) and certain types of seizures. Although the exact mechanism of action is unknown, the medication works on a specific subunit of nerve calcium channels; this helps reduce pain and blocks seizures.

Potential risks and side effects

Common side effects include sleepiness and dizziness. Apparently, some people like that feeling and therefore there is some abuse potential, although the medication is not a narcotic. Although the medication does not appear to have an effect on the liver, it is eliminated by the kidneys and therefore the dose must be changed if there are kidney problems. The medication may change some blood count values; currently there is no recommendation for routine lab monitoring. Some patients can gain weight or have swelling in the ankles. All medications in this category may worsen depression, possibly resulting in suicide. All patients should be aware of the risk and should let the prescribing practitioner know immediately of any worsening of depression. Pregabalin may work as a pain medication.

Dosing information

The medication can be started at lower doses twice daily or three times daily. Twice daily can be more convenient. The usual dose ends up at 300mg-600mg per day.

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Medication Information Sheet



Oxymorphone

brands: Nubain®, Opana®, Opana ER®

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Information & potential benefits

Schedule II opioids are pain relievers that work on specific opioid pain receptors in the body. Opioids are believed to be the most effective pain killing medications. **Oxymorphone is more potent than morphine and oxycodone.** Alternatives include non-medication modalities, pain interventions and non-opioid medications. Schedule II opioids have the highest risk of abuse and addiction and the highest risk of fatal overdose. They cannot be refilled and cannot be called into a pharmacy.

Potential risks and side effects

Common and basic side effects include nausea, dizziness, lightheadedness, fatigue, sweating, mental clouding, constipation, itching, and sexual problems. You should let your practitioner know if you experience any of these. Constipation may need continued attention. Diet is important: eating fruits and vegetables & drinking plenty of fluids also can help. There is a risk of addiction with the use of controlled substances. The risk appears low unless there is a family or personal history of addiction to drugs or alcohol. However, there is no guarantee that you will not become addicted. Opioid pain medications increase the risk of asthma attacks or other lung problems in patients with lung disease such as asthma. This potentially fatal effect can occur even in very low doses. All opioids are dangerous in persons with prostate problems, low blood pressure, head injury or increased intracranial pressure. Rare but serious side effects of opioid products include seizures, constipation requiring surgery, heart failure, and death.

Dosing information

Sustained-release (long-acting) form: Opana ER®. This is a sustained-release medication that helps reduce pain. It is used either every 12 hours and that schedule should NEVER vary. Increases in dose are done in conjunction with the prescriber. The "ER" after the name means "extended release." Please verify that you have received the correct form of Opana/Opana ER from the pharmacy. Crushing or chewing the tablet can result in fatal overdose.

Regular-release (short-acting) forms: Opana®. As you can see, the only difference in the names is the absence of "ER" on the short-acting form. Thus, there is a chance for error. Please verify whether you have received Opana or Opana ER from the pharmacy.

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Medication Information Sheet



Oxycodone brands: Percocet®, OxyContin®, Roxicodone®, Endocet®, Percodan®, OxyFast®, others

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Information & potential benefits

Schedule II opioids are pain relievers that work on specific opioid pain receptors in the body. Opioids are believed to be the most effective pain killing medications. **Oxycodone is more potent than morphine.** Alternatives include non-medication modalities, pain interventions and non-opioid medications. Schedule II opioids have the highest risk of abuse and addiction and the highest risk of fatal overdose. They cannot be refilled and cannot be called into a pharmacy.

Potential risks and side effects

Common and basic side effects include nausea, dizziness, lightheadedness, fatigue, sweating, mental clouding, constipation, itching, and sexual problems. You should let your practitioner know if you experience any of these. Constipation may need continued attention. Diet is important: eating fruits and vegetables & drinking plenty of fluids also can help. In many cases a laxative regimen is required. There is a risk of addiction with the use of controlled substances. The risk appears low unless there is a family or personal history of addiction to drugs or alcohol. However, there is no guarantee that you will not become addicted. Opioid pain medications increase the risk of asthma attacks or other lung problems in patients with lung disease such as asthma. All opioids are dangerous in persons with prostate problems, low blood pressure, head injury or increased intracranial pressure. Rare but serious side effects of opioid products include seizures, constipation requiring surgery, heart failure, and death.

Dosing information

Sustained-release (long-acting) form: OxyContin®. This is a sustained-release medication that helps reduce pain. It has received a great deal of press attention because of the various cases of abuse. It is appropriate to use for chronic pain but because of the legal and social implications, it must be used carefully. There is a belief, based on a recent legal action, that OxyContin may be more addictive or harder to stop than originally believed; this is not clear. It is used either every 12 hours or every 8 hours and that schedule should NEVER vary.

Regular-release (short-acting) forms: the liquid is called OxyFast® and oxycodone tablets are called Roxicodone®. Percocet is oxycodone with acetaminophen and Percodan is oxycodone with aspirin; thus, these medications also have acetaminophen and aspirin risks.

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Medication Information Sheet



Naproxen

brands: Aleve, others

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Information & potential benefits

Naproxen is a Non Steroidal Anti Inflammatory (NSAID). Naproxen, like other NSAIDS, inhibits the synthesis of prostaglandins (prostaglandins cause elevation of body temperature and sensitize nerve endings to pain transmission). By inhibiting prostaglandin synthesis, ibuprofen relieves fever and pain. NSAIDs are often essential agents in the management of arthritis and have a major role in the treatment of pain, but they also may be commonly employed for conditions that are less serious.

Potential risks and side effects

Common and basic side effects include rash, stomach upset, constipation, nausea, headache and dizziness. NSAIDs may cause an increased risk of serious blood clots in the brain and heart, heart attack, and stroke, which can be fatal. This risk may increase with duration of use. Patients with cardiovascular disease or risk factors for cardiovascular disease may be at greater risk. NSAIDs cause an increased risk of serious GI adverse events including bleeding, ulceration, and perforation of the stomach or intestines. These events can occur at any time during use and without warning symptoms. Elderly patients are at greater risk for serious GI events.

Dosing information

The smallest dose that achieves relief should be used. Naproxen can be over the counter or by prescription. It comes in strengths from 250 mg to 500mg. It comes in both immediate release and extended release medication. Immediate release: Pain relief can be felt as soon as 30 minutes to an hour after medication is taken.

Extended release: Not recommended for the treatment of acute pain because it takes longer to absorb than other forms.

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Medication Information Sheet



Morphine brands: Avinza[®], Kadian[®], MSContin[®], Oramorph SR[®], MSIR[®], Embeda[®], others

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Information & potential benefits

Schedule II opioids are pain relievers that work on specific opioid pain receptors in the body. Opioids are believed to be the most effective pain killing medications. Alternatives include non-medication modalities, pain interventions and non-opioid medications. Schedule II opioids have the highest risk of abuse and addiction and the highest risk of fatal overdose. They cannot be refilled and cannot be called into a pharmacy.

Potential risks and side effects

Common and basic side effects include nausea, dizziness, lightheadedness, fatigue, sweating, mental clouding, constipation, itching, and sexual problems. You should let your practitioner know if you experience any of these. Constipation may need continued attention. Diet is important: eating fruits and vegetables & drinking plenty of fluids also can help. In many cases a laxative regimen is required. There is a risk of addiction with the use of controlled substances. The risk appears low unless there is a family or personal history of addiction to drugs or alcohol. However, there is no guarantee that you will not become addicted. Opioid pain medications increase the risk of asthma attacks or other lung problems in patients with lung disease such as asthma. This potentially fatal effect can occur even in very low doses. All opioids are dangerous in persons with prostate problems, low blood pressure, head injury or increased intracranial pressure. Rare but serious side effects of opioid products include seizures, constipation requiring surgery, heart failure, and death. In the process of removing morphine from your body, the liver turns the morphine into other chemical compounds. Those other compounds are slowly removed from the body by the kidneys. In cases of kidney failure, the compounds are not removed from the body. Those morphine waste products can cause twitching, muscle jerks, swelling/edema, and/or confusion and such side effects can occur even in cases of normal kidney function.

Dosing information

Morphine for chronic pain comes as injections, liquid, regular tablets and long-acting tablets.

The long acting morphine products (such as Avinza, Kadian, MSContin, OramorphSR and Embeda) are used for chronic pain and should be taken consistently. Extra doses are never used for extra pain as these medications work slowly and work properly by keeping a stable level of morphine in the body.

The liquid and regular tablets are used for both the extra pain that can occur occasionally in chronic pain and in the acute pain of surgery or injury. The liquid form is called Roxanol[®] and the tablets are called MSIR[®]. These are very potent medications that should be used only as directed.

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Medication Information Sheet



Milnacipran

brands: Savella®

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Information & potential benefits

Milnacipran is a unique medication. It is the only medication currently available in the United States that is FDA approved for fibromyalgia and for no other condition. This drug focuses on the pain component of those other medications and is the only drug in existence that has a fibromyalgia pain indication as its only clinical indication. The medication works by helping to prevent the destruction of norepinephrine and serotonin, two natural brain chemicals involved in pain transmission.

Potential risks and side effects

Milnacipran may cause weight loss. Importantly, like all medications based on anti-seizure or anti-depressant medications, there is a suicide warning. This is rare, but all patients should be aware of the risk and should let the prescribing provider know immediately of any worsening of depression. This medication, like most, should not be used with MAO inhibitors. Fortunately, there are few drug interactions, but they include: epinephrine, serotonin, digoxin, clonidine and clomipramine. The medication can increase blood pressure so you should monitor this with your primary provider. The medication may increase the risk of bleeding.

Dosing information

Like many similar medications, milnaciprin is gradually increased from a low dose. Personal clinical experience suggests titrating slowly to help reduce the chance of nausea when first starting the medication. This medication may take up to 8 weeks before benefit is appreciated.

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Medication Information Sheet



Methylphenidate/amphetamine/dextroamphetamine

brands: Advil and many others

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Information & potential benefits

Ibuprofen is a Non Steroidal Anti Inflammatory (NSAID). Ibuprofen, like other NSAIDS, inhibits the synthesis of prostaglandins (prostaglandins cause elevation of body temperature and sensitize nerve endings to pain transmission). By inhibiting prostaglandin synthesis, ibuprofen relieves fever and pain. NSAIDs are often essential agents in the management of arthritis and have a major role in the treatment of pain, but they also may be commonly employed for conditions that are less serious.

Potential risks and side effects

Common and basic side effects include rash, stomach upset, constipation, nausea, headache and dizziness. NSAIDs may cause an increased risk of serious blood clots in the brain and heart, heart attack, and stroke, which can be fatal. This risk may increase with duration of use. Patients with cardiovascular disease or risk factors for cardiovascular disease may be at greater risk. NSAIDs cause an increased risk of serious GI adverse events including bleeding, ulceration, and perforation of the stomach or intestines. These events can occur at any time during use and without warning symptoms. Elderly patients are at greater risk for serious GI events.

Dosing information

The smallest dose that achieves relief should be used. Over the counter ibuprofen can be up to 200mg per tablet. They can be prescribed up to 800mg per tablet by a provider. The maximum recommended dose is 3200mg per day. For chronic conditions it can take several weeks to see the desired effect, but most of the time it is noticed within 2 weeks.

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Medication Information Sheet



Methocarbamol

brands: Robaxin

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Information & potential benefits

This medicine is a skeletal muscle relaxant. The precise way it works is unknown, but it is thought to depress the central nervous system. Methocarbamol relieves muscle pain and discomfort caused by certain muscle conditions. It is used along with rest and physical therapy.

Potential risks and side effects

Common and basic side effects include blurred vision, dizziness, drowsiness, eye redness or irritation, fever, headache, hives, lightheadedness, nasal stuffiness, nausea. You should seek medical attention if you experience severe allergic reactions (rash; hives; itching; difficulty breathing; tightness in the chest; swelling of the mouth, face, lips, or tongue); fainting, seizures, yellowing of the skin or eyes. This medicine may discolor the urine. This is normal and not a cause for concern. You should not use methocarbamol if you are currently using Anticholinesterases (eg, neostigmine) because their effectiveness may be decreased by this medicine; or Sodium oxybate (GHB) because the risk of its side effects may be increased by this medicine.

Dosing information

Methocarbamol is started at lower doses and slowly increased until therapeutic doses are reached. Average dose is 4,000mg daily. Maximum dose is 8,000mg daily. Take this medicine by mouth on an empty stomach. If stomach upset occurs, take with food or immediately after a meal to reduce stomach irritation.

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Medication Information Sheet



Methadone

brands: Methadose®, others

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Information & potential benefits

Schedule II opioids are pain relievers that work on specific opioid pain receptors in the body. Opioids are believed to be the most effective pain killing medications. **Methadone is more potent than morphine or oxycodone.** Alternatives include non-medication modalities, pain interventions and non-opioid medications. Schedule II opioids have the highest risk of abuse and addiction and the highest risk of fatal overdose. They cannot be refilled and cannot be called into a pharmacy. Unlike other opioids, methadone has activity at three different levels in the body, which may explain why it tends to cause less opioid tolerance and why it tends to provide better pain control. (1) Like other opioids, it works at the mu opioid receptor, (2) It also blocks the NMDA receptor which could reduce tolerance, and (3) It also inhibits the reuptake of both norepinephrine and serotonin like some of the newer antidepressants, which could explain its benefit in neuropathic pain. Although it has "three times the benefit" it also has "three times the risks."

Potential risks and side effects

Common and basic side effects include nausea, dizziness, lightheadedness, fatigue, sweating, mental clouding, constipation, itching, and sexual problems. You should let your practitioner know if you experience any of these. Constipation may need continued attention. Diet is important: eating fruits and vegetables & drinking plenty of fluids also can help. There is a risk of addiction with the use of controlled substances. The risk appears low unless there is a family or personal history of addiction to drugs or alcohol. However, there is no guarantee that you will not become addicted. Opioid pain medications increase the risk of asthma attacks or other lung problems in patients with lung disease such as asthma. All opioids are dangerous in persons with prostate problems, low blood pressure, head injury or increased intracranial pressure. Rare but serious side effects of opioid products include seizures, constipation requiring surgery, heart failure, and death. Methadone slowly accumulates in the body. Thus, there can be a delay of 1-2 weeks in side effects. Because the side effects of any given dose may not be clear for a week or two, the dose must be increased very slowly and cautiously. **Patients must not increase the dose on their own, not even 1 pill-not even 1 time, because of the significant risk of delayed toxicity and sudden death.** Also, there is evidence that methadone can affect the way the heart beats by increasing a part of the heart cycle called the QT. If the QT interval gets too long, the heart could stop suddenly. The exact doses and risk factors are not known, but a recent medical consensus opinion recommends a screening EKG for those patients who: take more than 200 mg/day, are on drugs known to interact with methadone (which are many), and who already have prolonged QT intervals. A screening EKG can help identify potential problems but in no way guarantees safety.

Dosing information

	MORNING	AFTERNOON	EVENING
Week 1	5mg		
Week 2	5mg		5mg
Week 3	5mg	5mg	5mg
Week 4	10mg	5mg	5mg
Week 5	10mg	5mg	10mg
Week 6	10mg	10mg	10mg

Do not increase each week unless the medication is well tolerated. Do not increase if it is already working in the lower dose. Do not ever take extra medication or increase faster.

Important information

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Medication Information Sheet



Metaxolone

brands: Skelaxin®

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Information & potential benefits

Skelaxin is a unique muscle relaxing medication with an uncertain mechanism of action. This medication has a relatively short duration of action and therefore can be taken several times per day. This is both a plus and a minus: On the good side, this medication can be taken as needed, whenever muscle spasms occur. If there are no spasms, the patient does not need to take the medication. On the bad side, this medication is relatively short acting and therefore one dose would not typically provide benefit for an extended period of time, such as overnight while sleeping.

Potential risks and side effects

Skelaxin (like most other medications) is eliminated by the kidneys and liver, it should not be used in patients with significant kidney or liver dysfunction. In addition to the standard side effects, other side effects of Skelaxin include sleepiness, nausea, rash, itching, anemia, and jaundice. Overdose of Skelaxin can be fatal. An interesting thing about Skelaxin is that it can cause more sleepiness if it is taken with food. Please don't forget that any medication that can cause sleepiness could impair performance and skills (such as driving or operating machinery). And, if a patient takes more than one medication that could cause sleepiness, the amount of sleepiness could be greatly increased. Skelaxin may work as a muscle relaxer.

Dosing information

Unlike some other medications, Skelaxin can be used on an as needed basis, with the standard dosing being one 800mg tablet three or four times daily. We suggest starting with less medication just to determine safety and tolerability. Also, the tablets are very large and may be difficult for some patients to swallow. We suggest ½ tablet initially, with a gradual increase to the standard one tablet 3-4 times per day as needed. Patients should always use the lowest effective dose. There is no need to increase to the next higher dose if the current dose is helpful. Also, patients should NOT increase to the next higher dose if the present dose is not tolerated.

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Medication Information Sheet



Memantine

brands: Namenda®

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Information & potential benefits

Namenda is a medication in a class by itself. It is FDA approved as a treatment for the memory loss of Alzheimer disease and it works by blocking NMDA receptors. NMDA receptors are also involved in pain perception. Activation of NMDA receptors occurs in chronic pain and may be associated with the wind-up phenomenon (worsening pain) and with tolerance (needing more and more medication to stop pain). Other NMDA receptor blockers are used in pain management. Although not FDA approved for pain, Namenda appears helpful in clinical experience for some patients with daily headaches and with other pain syndromes. The use of Namenda for pain is investigational. This means that insurance companies may NOT pay for the medication.

Potential risks and side effects

In addition to the general side effects listed in the disclaimer, the most common side effects from Namenda are dizziness, confusion, headache and constipation. The dose should be reduced if there is any kidney damage. Because the medication undergoes minimal change in the body, it is less likely to interfere with other medications; still, caution is appropriate when multiple medications are used. At this time there are no recommendations for routine blood monitoring.

Dosing information

Please note that the use of this medication for pain is based on clinical information from pain centers. Clinical studies are underway and the results are not known. Our experience is that approximately 50% of patients experience a significant benefit from the medication; the other 50% do not.

Important information

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Medication Information Sheet



Meloxicam

brands: Mobic

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Information & potential benefits

Meloxicam is a Non Steroidal Anti Inflammatory Drug (NSAID). Meloxicam, like other NSAIDs, inhibits the synthesis of prostaglandins (prostaglandins cause elevation of body temperature and sensitize nerve endings to pain transmission). By inhibiting prostaglandin synthesis, meloxicam relieves fever and pain. Meloxicam is different from other NSAIDs because it picks specific prostiglandins to inhibit. This can lead to less GI side effects, but not always. NSAIDs are often essential agents in the management of arthritis and have a major role in the treatment of pain, but they also may be commonly employed for conditions that are less serious.

Potential risks and side effects

Common and basic side effects include rash, stomach upset, constipation, nausea, headache and dizziness.

NSAIDs may cause an increased risk of serious blood clots in the brain and heart, heart attack, and stroke, which can be fatal. This risk may increase with duration of use. Patients with cardiovascular disease or risk factors for cardiovascular disease may be at greater risk. NSAIDs cause an increased risk of serious GI adverse events including bleeding, ulceration, and perforation of the stomach or intestines. These events can occur at any time during use and without warning symptoms. Elderly patients are at greater risk for serious GI events.

Dosing information

The smallest dose that achieves relief should be used. Dosing is usually started at 7.5mg per day. Max dose is 15mg per day. The limited range of dosing limits the usefulness of this drug.

Important information

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Medication Information Sheet



Lidocaine patch

brands: Lidoderm

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Information & potential benefits

Lidocaine is a local anesthetic that can be used in a variety of ways. It is used in injectable form for pain relief during minor surgical procedures. It can be applied to the skin in the form of skins, gels and patches. It blocks pain by inhibiting the chemicals in the nerve so they cannot transmit pain impulses. The lidocaine patch is currently FDA approved for the treatment of post-herpetic neuralgia (pain following a shingles outbreak). It may be used off label for treatment of other pain conditions.

Potential risks and side effects

During or immediately after treatment with a lidocaine patch, the skin at the site of application may develop blisters, bruising, burning sensation, lightening of the skin, dermatitis, discoloration, swelling, redness, irritation or may be the feeling of abnormal sensation. These reactions are generally mild and transient, resolving by themselves within a few minutes to hours. Some people may have an allergy to the products that make the patches stick; others may have a true allergic reaction to the lidocaine. Rarely a severe allergic reaction can occur. Stop using the patch and seek medical attention if you experience swelling of the lips or tongue, trouble breathing or widespread rash with more itching.

Dosing information

The patches are 5mg. One to three patches can be applied at one time depending on the size of the affected area. Leave the patch on for 12 hours within a 24 hour period. **The potential exists for a small child or a pet to suffer serious adverse reactions from chewing or ingesting a new or used lidocaine patch, although the risk with this formulation has not been evaluated. It is important for patients to store and dispose of lidocaine patches out of the reach of children and pets.**

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Medication Information Sheet



Ibuprofen

brands: Advil and many others

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Information & potential benefits

Ibuprofen is a Non Steroidal Anti Inflammatory (NSAID). Ibuprofen, like other NSAIDS, inhibits the synthesis of prostaglandins (prostaglandins cause elevation of body temperature and sensitize nerve endings to pain transmission). By inhibiting prostaglandin synthesis, ibuprofen relieves fever and pain. NSAIDs are often essential agents in the management of arthritis and have a major role in the treatment of pain, but they also may be commonly employed for conditions that are less serious.

Potential risks and side effects

Common and basic side effects include rash, stomach upset, constipation, nausea, headache and dizziness.

NSAIDs may cause an increased risk of serious blood clots in the brain and heart, heart attack, and stroke, which can be fatal. This risk may increase with duration of use. Patients with cardiovascular disease or risk factors for cardiovascular disease may be at greater risk. NSAIDs cause an increased risk of serious GI adverse events including bleeding, ulceration, and perforation of the stomach or intestines. These events can occur at any time during use and without warning symptoms. Elderly patients are at greater risk for serious GI events.

Dosing information

The smallest dose that achieves relief should be used. Over the counter ibuprofen can be up to 200mg per tablet. They can be prescribed up to 800mg per tablet by a provider. The maximum recommended dose is 3200mg per day. For chronic conditions it can take several weeks to see the desired effect, but most of the time it is noticed within 2 weeks.

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Medication Information Sheet



Hydromorphone

brands: Dilaudid®

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Information & potential benefits

Schedule II opioids are pain relievers that work on specific opioid pain receptors in the body. Opioids are believed to be the most effective pain killing medications. **Hydromorphone is more potent than morphine, oxycodone or oxymorphone.** Alternatives include non-medication modalities, pain interventions and non-opioid medications. Schedule II opioids have the highest risk of abuse and addiction and the highest risk of fatal overdose. They cannot be refilled and cannot be called into a pharmacy.

Potential risks and side effects

Common and basic side effects include nausea, dizziness, lightheadedness, fatigue, sweating, mental clouding, constipation, itching, and sexual problems. You should let your practitioner know if you experience any of these. Constipation may need continued attention. Diet is important: eating fruits and vegetables & drinking plenty of fluids also can help. There is a risk of addiction with the use of controlled substances. The risk appears low unless there is a family or personal history of addiction to drugs or alcohol. However, there is no guarantee that you will not become addicted. Opioid pain medications increase the risk of asthma attacks or other lung problems in patients with lung disease such as asthma. All opioids are dangerous in persons with prostate problems, low blood pressure, head injury or increased intracranial pressure. Rare but serious side effects of opioid products include seizures, constipation requiring surgery, heart failure, and death.

Dosing information

Dilaudid, unfortunately, is very short-acting, just 2-3 hours. Therefore, it is very helpful for sudden, brief bouts of pain but quite inconvenient for chronic pain. Regular-release (short-acting) forms: hydromorphone comes as injections, tablets and a rectal suppository. The injections usually are used in the emergency room. Suppositories are sometimes used when patients cannot swallow without vomiting, such as with very severe migraine headaches. The tablets are the most commonly used form outside of the hospital setting.

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Medication Information Sheet



Gabapentin

brands: Neurontin®

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Information & potential benefits

Gabapentin is a unique medication that has changed some concepts in pain management. Although it originally was a seizure-preventing medication, most of its use is for pain management. Neurontin is FDA approved for neuropathic pain (related to shingles) and for seizures. The medication works on a specific subunit of nerve calcium channels; this helps reduce pain and blocks seizures.

Potential risks and side effects

Common side effects of gabapentin include sleepiness and dizziness. Apparently, some people like that feeling and therefore there is some abuse potential, although the medication is not a narcotic. Although the medication does not appear to have an effect on the liver, the medication is removed from the body by the kidneys. The dose must be changed if there are kidney problems. The medication may change some blood count values; currently there is no recommendation for routine lab monitoring. Some patients can gain weight or have swelling in the ankles. There is potential for hallucinations and sexual side effects. All medications in this category may worsen depression, possibly resulting in suicide. All patients should be aware of the risk and should let the prescribing practitioner know immediately of any worsening of depression. Gabapentin may work as a pain medication and a seizure-blocker.

Dosing information

The medication does not last long and is used three times daily; some patients use the medication once or twice daily but it probably does not work as well unless it is used three times daily on a consistent basis. *The usual dose in pain centers ranges between 1200-3600mg per day if not more, which is more than the doses tested by the FDA.*

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Medication Information Sheet



Fentanyl

brands: Duragesic®, Actiq®, Fentora®, others

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Information & potential benefits

Schedule II opioids are pain relievers that work on specific opioid pain receptors in the body. Opioids are believed to be the most effective pain killing medications. **Fentanyl is more potent than morphine, oxycodone or oxymorphone.** Alternatives include non-medication modalities, pain interventions and non-opioid medications. Schedule II opioids have the highest risk of abuse and addiction and the highest risk of fatal overdose. They cannot be refilled and cannot be called into a pharmacy.

Potential risks and side effects

Common and basic side effects include nausea, dizziness, lightheadedness, fatigue, sweating, mental clouding, constipation, itching, and sexual problems. You should let your practitioner know if you experience any of these. Constipation may need continued attention. Diet is important: eating fruits and vegetables & drinking plenty of fluids also can help. In many cases a laxative regimen is required. There is a risk of addiction with the use of controlled substances. The risk appears low unless there is a family or personal history of addiction to drugs or alcohol. However, there is no guarantee that you will not become addicted. Opioid pain medications increase the risk of asthma attacks or other lung problems in patients with lung disease such as asthma. All opioids are dangerous in persons with prostate problems, low blood pressure, head injury or increased intracranial pressure. Rare but serious side effects of opioid products include seizures, constipation requiring surgery, heart failure, and death. Drugs that DO inhibit the metabolism of fentanyl include: grapefruit juice, fluconazole, ketoconazole, itraconazole, erythromycin, telithromycin, clarithromycin, ritonavir, nefazodone and quercetin. These medications can result in potentially fatal overdose. There are drugs that make fentanyl medication weaker. If you use those medications while using fentanyl, and then stop those medications, the fentanyl may become suddenly stronger. Those medications include: phenobarbital, carbamazepine, St. John's Wort, modafinil, phenytoin, rifampin, dexamethasone, felbamate, griseofulvin, pioglitazone, primidone, topiramate, troglitazone, and rifabutin. PATCHES (Duragesic®): Please let the prescriber know if the patches cause any redness, do not stick properly, fall off early or otherwise cause problems. Patches cannot be used in hot circumstances, such as on a very hot day, in a hot tub, in a sauna, with a heating pad, etc. Doing so can cause a sudden release of fentanyl, causing fatal overdose.

Dosing information

LOZENGES (Actiq®) & TABLETS (Fentora®): The FDA has approved the fentanyl lozenges and dissolving tablets for the sudden, severe breakthrough pain associated with cancer. The FDA has acknowledged the recent studies that fentanyl dissolving tablets are safe and effective for breakthrough pain in patients with back pain and/or neuropathic pain, but they do not wish to approve this use, fearing an increase in drug abuse. The FDA has reiterated that physicians may legally prescribe the dissolving tablets for non-cancer pain, but that their withholding the formal approval means that the company cannot advertise the tablets for non-cancer pain. Because about 90% of these tablets are used for non-cancer pain, off-label use is the standard of care. There is a separate Fentora consent form to emphasize the issues briefly summarized above.

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Medication Information Sheet



Duloxetine

brands: Cymbalta®

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Information & potential benefits

Duloxetine is a pain and depression medication. It currently is FDA approved for depression as well as the pain of fibromyalgia. Based on studies, it may be approved for other types of chronic pain in the future. It is not uncommon for a pain patient to also experience depression. The medication works by helping to prevent the destruction of two of the nervous system's important chemicals: serotonin and norepinephrine.

Potential risks and side effects

Fortunately, the medication tends not to cause weight gain, and may cause some weight loss. Of course, every person is different and some patients could gain weight. Common side effects include sleepiness, dizziness, nausea and dry mouth. Like most medications, the liver helps remove the medication from the body. Therefore, Cymbalta must be used carefully if there is any liver disease. Like most pain medications, Cymbalta should not be used with alcohol. There have been cases of liver problems with the medication and it seems that the liver problems occur more frequently in alcohol users. Cymbalta should not be used with uncontrolled narrow-angle glaucoma. It should not be used with MAO inhibitors. As with all antidepressants and other neuropathic pain medications, there is a potential worsening of depression when the medication is first started. All medications in this class may worsen depression when first started, possibly resulting in suicide. This is rare, but all patients should be aware of the risk and should let the prescribing provider know immediately of any worsening of depression

Dosing information

The FDA-approved doses begin at 20-30mg per day and increase to 60mg per day. Many pain patients use 90mg per day. Those doses, although helpful, were not evaluated by the FDA. There are two common dose regimens, the low dose regimen using 20mg increments, and the higher-dose regimen, using 30mg increments. The 30mg regimen appears more common in pain centers.

Important information

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Medication Information Sheet



Clonidine

brands: Catapres®, Catapres-TTS®

Medications are only ONE part of a successful treatment plan. They are appropriate when they provide benefit, improve function and have either no or mild, manageable side effects. Importantly, medications (even if natural) are chemical substances not expected in the body, and as such have side effects. Some of the side effects might be unknown. The use of medications/drugs for any purpose requires patient consent. This practice does NOT require a patient to use any medication.

Information & potential benefits

Clonidine is a pain and blood pressure medication. It is very unique. It was introduced and FDA approved as a blood pressure medication, but over time clonidine was found to block pain both at the peripheral nerves where the pain begins and also at the spinal cord where pain is transmitted. Clonidine also helps relieve/prevent withdrawal symptoms from opioid/narcotic pain medications. Clonidine also has other potential uses including tremor and attention-deficit disorder, among others.

Potential risks and side effects

Because clonidine lowers blood pressure, it should be used with caution in those with low blood pressure or with heart disease. It also should be used with caution if there is liver or kidney dysfunction. Common side effects include sleepiness, especially when the medication is first used. It lowers blood pressure. Other side effects include dry mouth, dry eyes, fatigue, headache, nausea and impotence. More serious side effects include dizziness and lightheadedness because this may mean that the blood pressure is too low. We ask that each patient check blood pressure at home daily while using clonidine, looking for any change in the regular blood pressure. If there is any change or if the side effects above occur, patients should notify the prescribing provider immediately. Clonidine may work as a pain medication. Clonidine should not be stopped suddenly because of a withdrawal syndrome: the blood pressure could go up really high and cause serious problems. This medication is NOT to be used without the knowledge and permission of your primary care provider, because of the effect on blood pressure.

Dosing information

Typical dosing begins very low and gradually increases. Patients should use the lowest effective dose. There is no need to increase to the next higher dose if the current dose is helpful. Also, patients should not increase to the next higher dose if the present dose is not tolerated.

Important information

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Medication Information Sheet



Carisoprodol

brands: Soma

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Information & potential benefits

Soma is a skeletal muscle relaxant that works in the spinal cord. It is used to treat muscle pain and cramping associated with several different medical conditions. The exact way that it works is unknown.

Potential risks and side effects

Common and basic side effects include dizziness, drowsiness and headache. Seek medical attention as soon as possible if you experience the following; severe allergic reactions (rash; hives; itching; difficulty breathing; tightness in the chest; swelling of the mouth, face, lips, or tongue; hoarseness), fainting, fast heartbeat, fever, chills, loss of coordination; mood or mental changes, seizures severe or persistent dizziness, severe or persistent trouble sleeping; tremors. Do not drink alcohol while using this product. Some people who use this medicine for a long time may develop a need to continue taking it. People who take high doses are also at risk. This is known as **DEPENDENCE**. If you stop taking this medicine suddenly, you may have **WITHDRAWAL** symptoms. These may include stomach cramps, trouble sleeping, headache, nausea, or seizures. **Although this is not a controlled substance, the potential for abuse and addiction still exist.** Providers may be reluctant to prescribe this medication especially if your are taking and opiate pain reliever.

Dosing information

The smallest dose that achieves relief should be used. This medication may be prescribed up to three times daily or just at bedtime depending on symptoms.

Important information

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Medication Information Sheet



Benzodiazapines

clonazepam, lorazepam, diazepam, Klonopin, Valium, Ativan and others

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Information & potential benefits

Benzodiazapines work by increasing the action of a specific chemical receptor in the brain. They are used to treat anxiety disorders, seizure disorders, some muscle spasm disorders and as a short term sleep aid. It is used by some providers as an adjunctive (helper) medication. Long-acting benzodiazapines may be used as sedation for medical procedures.

Potential risks and side effects

Common and basic side effects include drowsiness; uncoordination; muscle weakness; tiredness. Seek medical attention if you experience the following; severe allergic reactions (rash; hives; itching; difficulty breathing; tightness in the chest; swelling of the mouth, face, lips, or tongue), confusion, difficulty breathing, fever, chills; hallucinations inability to control urination or difficulty urinating, memory problems or memory loss, new or worsening mental or mood changes (eg, agitation, aggressiveness, behavior changes, depression, irritability, rage, restlessness), severe or persistent dizziness or lightheadedness, slurred speech, tremor, trouble sleeping, yellowing of the skin or eyes. When used for long periods of time or at high doses, this medicine may not work as well and may require higher doses to obtain the same effect as when originally taken. This is known as **TOLERANCE**. Talk with your doctor if this medicine stops working well. **Do not take more than prescribed**. Some people who use this medicine for a long time may develop a need to continue taking it. People who take high doses are also at risk. This is known as **DEPENDENCE**. If you stop taking this medicine suddenly, you may have **WITHDRAWAL** symptoms. These may include convulsions, tremor, stomach and muscle cramps, vomiting, or sweating. Do not suddenly stop taking this medicine without first checking with your doctor. This medication is especially dangerous in patients with a history of alcoholism or abuse.

Dosing information

Benzodiazapines come in a variety of forms including oral, injectable, suppository, and IV. The doses vary widely because of the different potencies of medications. Some are long-acting and some are short acting. Regardless of type, the smallest dose that achieves the desired effect should be used and the medications should be only used for short periods of time to avoid dependence and tolerance.

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Medication Information Sheet



Baclofen

brands: Lioresal®

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Information & potential benefits

Baclofen is a pain and muscle medication that helps with muscle spasms, cramps and abnormally increased tone. Originally, an anti-spasticity medication, it is frequently used in headache prevention and treatment, especially when the headaches are associated with neck muscle tightness or neck pain. Baclofen is used in pill form and in liquid form for implanted spinal pumps. Baclofen works in the spinal cord and cerebellum. In the spinal cord, baclofen blocks some of the signals that go to the muscles, making the muscles contract somewhat less, relieving spasms and cramps. Baclofen also may interfere with substance P, a pain-transmitting chemical in the spinal cord.

Potential risks and side effects

Because baclofen relaxes muscles, the muscles can seem weak—including bladder muscles—because more muscle signals are blocked. If so, the dose is too high and should be reduced. Typical side effects include those listed in the disclaimer below and others: weakness, nausea, low blood pressure, urinary frequency, fatigue, incoordination, rash, itching, ankle swelling, weight gain, sweating and nasal congestion, and others. Serious side effects include imbalance, passing out, seizures, hallucinations, depression, psychiatric changes, respiratory depression and acute withdrawal if suddenly stopped. Baclofen should NOT be stopped suddenly. Baclofen may work as both a pain medication and a muscle relaxing agent.

Dosing information

Typical dosing begins very low and gradually increases. Patients should use the lowest effective dose. There is no need to increase to the next higher dose if the current dose is helpful. Also, patients should not increase to the next higher dose if the present dose is not tolerated.

Important information

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Medication Information Sheet



Armodafanil/modafanil

brands: Nuvigil® / Provigil®

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Information & potential benefits

Both modafanil and armodafanil work on certain receptors in the brain's sleep-wake center. They are not stimulants like the amphetamines. They can be used daily or as needed. It does not appear that there is a withdrawal when the medication is stopped and it does not appear that there is a physiological dependence or tolerance. These medications are used to treat sleep-wake cycle disorders. Nuvigil is FDA approved for excessive sleepiness and fatigue associated with shift-work sleep disorder, sleep apnea and narcolepsy. Other uses are off-label. It is within the standard of care to use it for other conditions with excessive sleepiness or fatigue, such as multiple sclerosis, fibromyalgia, depression and other conditions. These uses are not currently FDA approved, however.

Potential risks and side effects

Because these are not stimulants, studies have shown a rise in blood pressure or some other effects like stimulants. Still, there are potential side effects. Headache (especially for the first few days) and nausea are the most likely side effects. Theoretically, based on the way the medication works in the body, it should not affect the heart, but caution is always appropriate. There were rare circumstances of a serious allergic-type rash. If any patient develops anything even close to a rash, the prescribing provider should be notified immediately and the drug should be stopped. They should be used with caution if there are any liver problems. There are interactions with other medications: Antifungals, Phenobarbital, barbiturates, Tegretol, cyclosporins, linezolid, MAO inhibitors, birth control pills, Dilantin, rifampin, tacrolimus, theophyllines, Coumadin and other medications may interact. Oral contraceptives may not work as well. Nuvigil helps reduce excessive sleepiness and fatigue. As with many drugs sometimes used in patients with depression, there is the possibility that the medication could worsen depression; if this occurs, the prescribing provider should be notified immediately.

Dosing information

Armodafanil and modafanil are fairly costly medications. They may not be covered by many insurance plans and we cannot guarantee that we will be able to obtain coverage for you. For armodafanil, most patients use 150mg per day. Doses range from 50mg to 250mg per day. For modafanil, most patients use 200mg per day.

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Medication Information Sheet



Acetaminophen/apap

brands: Tylenol® & many others

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Information & potential benefits

Acetaminophen (apap) is a fever-reducer and pain-killer in its own class. It does not reduce inflammation. Patients may use acetaminophen on its own (Tylenol, store brands) or they may find it as an ingredient in several other medications (cold remedies like TheraFlu or NyQuill, aspirin-free pain meds like Excedrin Migraine, sinus medications like Coricidin Sinus, sleeping pills like Tylenol PM, etc.). The expected benefits of acetaminophen are reduction of fever and reduced pain. Because it does not cause GI bleeding (like aspirin and NSAIDs can), it often is believed to be safer than aspirin or NSAIDs. Acetaminophen is combined with opioids in order to augment the power of the opioid. Percocet, Ultracet, Vicodin and Norco are examples.

Potential risks and side effects

Although most people are familiar with acetaminophen, and tolerate it very well, there still are significant risks associated with its use. In general, proper use of acetaminophen is safe. The risk of irreversible and fatal liver failure is well known, with acetaminophen causing three times more liver failure than all other drugs combined. The risk is associated with both how much acetaminophen is taken at one time (1000mg max) and how much acetaminophen is taken total per day (4000mg max). Acetaminophen is not to be taken with alcohol because this increases the liver risk. There is evidence that the lifetime consumption of apap slowly adds up in the body, increasing the chance of end-stage kidney failure. Acetaminophen also has additional potential risks, most of which are very rare, but still possible. Allergic reactions, blood disorders such as anemia, abdominal pain, asthma, rash and similar side effects may all occur.

Dosing information

Again, acetaminophen—when used properly—tends to be very safe. In fact, the FDA has found it so safe that it does not require a prescription. However, no chemical ingested into the body is without potential risk. Alternatives include non-medication modalities, pain interventions and other medications that may work in a similar manner but that may have different potential risks. Recommendations from liver specialists currently include: 1000mg at any one time, 4000mg per day maximum for short-term use (up to 1 month), 2000mg per day maximum for long-term use. No alcohol!

Important information

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Medication Information Sheet



Tramadol

brands: Ultram[®], Ultracet[®], Ultram ER[®]

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Information & potential benefits

Tramadol is a pain reliever. It fills a unique space between non-opioid medications (like acetaminophen & ibuprofen) and opioid medications (like oxycodone & morphine). Tramadol is a centrally acting opioid that has atypical opioid properties, but is not considered a controlled substance in the United States. Tramadol has both pain killing properties (similar to opioids) and anti-depressant-type qualities (similar to serotonin medications). Therefore, it also has side effects of both pain killers and anti-depressants.

Potential risks and side effects

The most common side effects of tramadol are stomach upset and constipation. Seizures can occur in patients who abuse tramadol, use antidepressants or who have a history of seizures. Dependence/addiction is always possible with any medication. Tramadol typically is not recommended in cases of liver problems because the liver helps remove the medication from the body. Although not a narcotic or true opioid, there are some similarities. All opioids are very dangerous in persons with asthma or other lung disease, prostate problems, low blood pressure, head injury or increased intracranial pressure. Rare but serious side effects of opioid products include seizures, constipation requiring surgery, heart failure, and—in case of overdose—death. Side effects that are more common are: headache, nausea, constipation, dizziness, sweating, dry mouth, abdominal pain, and low blood pressure. Tramadol may work as a pain blocker and may have a very mild antidepressant benefit.

Dosing information

In the United States, tramadol is available as one of three preparations:

- (1) Ultram, a 50mg tramadol tablet, with a limit of 8 doses per day,
- (2) Ultracet, a combination of tramadol and acetaminophen, with a similar limit, and
- (3) Ultram ER, a long-acting preparation of tramadol, taken once per day. Ultram ER typically is taken as 100mg per day for 1 week, then, if needed and well tolerated, 200mg per day for 1 week, and then, if needed and well tolerated, 300mg per day. Studies suggest that if a patient uses more than 300mg per day, there is no additional benefit but there are additional side effects.

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Medication Information Sheet



Topiramate

brands: Topamax®

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Information & potential benefits

Topiramate is a unique medication. It is FDA-approved for specific seizure disorders and for headache prevention. It is also used frequently off-label for neuropathic pain syndromes. Topamax works in distinct ways to block seizures and to block pain. One of the actions is to inhibit an enzyme called carbonic anhydrase; there is a “water-pill” effect.

Potential risks and side effects

Common side effects of topiramate include tingling of the fingers or toes after taking a dose, reduced sweating, weight loss, tiredness or sleepiness and similar effects. Because the medication reduces sweating, there is greater chance of heatstroke in hot situations. A small percentage of patients may develop kidney stones; the best way to prevent this is to drink plenty of fluid. Importantly, there have been some reports of glaucoma related to the medication use. Therefore, patients must watch for any visual disturbances or changes and patients should have appropriate ophthalmological examinations. The dose is changed if there is liver or kidney disease. Topamax can decrease birth control pill effectiveness. And, no medication invented to prevent seizures should be stopped suddenly, including Topamax. There are some routine blood tests that are done occasionally while using Topamax. Topamax may work as an anti-seizure medication, a pain medication and a headache-preventing agent. All medications in this category can increase depression. All patients should be aware of the risk and should let the prescribing practitioner know immediately of any worsening of depression.

Dosing information

Topamax can be used once or twice daily. Because Topamax can affect concentration, some patients prefer a nighttime only regimen. This medication may take up to 8 weeks to reach effective dose.

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Medication Information Sheet



Tizanidine

brands: Zanaflex®

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Information & potential benefits

Tizanidine is a medication that helps with muscle spasms and musculoskeletal pain syndromes; there is evidence that it helps neuropathic and musculoskeletal pain through alpha-2-receptor activity. Studies have shown Zanaflex helpful for neuropathic pain and some types of headache. It is currently FDA approved for muscle spasticity.

Potential risks and side effects

Tizanidine should be used carefully in cases of liver or kidney disease, low blood pressure, or heart conduction problems (QT interval problems). **It should not be used with Luvox or with the antibiotic Cipro (ciprofloxacin). There are many other drugs that can interact with Tizanidine.** In addition to the standard side effects listed in the disclaimer, common side effects of Zanaflex include dry mouth, sleepiness, dizziness, asthenia, infection, constipation, urinary frequency, flu-like feeling, low blood pressure, more spasms, sore throat and runny nose. More serious side effects include liver damage, severe slowing of the heart beat and hallucinations. Tizanidine occasionally causes liver injury. In controlled clinical studies, approximately 5% of patients treated with tizanidine had non-serious elevations of liver function tests. Most cases resolved rapidly upon drug withdrawal with no reported residual problems. In occasional symptomatic cases, nausea, vomiting, anorexia and jaundice have been reported. Tizanidine may work as a pain medication and a muscle relaxer.

Dosing information

The maximum dose of tizanidine is 36mg per day. It is NOT LIKELY that you will reach the maximum dose; most patients do well at lower doses. Patients should use the lowest effective dose. There is no need to increase to the next higher dose if the current dose is helpful. Also, patients should not increase to the next higher dose if the present dose is not tolerated.

Important information

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Medication Information Sheet



TCA's (tri-cyclic, anti-depressants)

amitriptyline, nortriptyline, Elavil, Aventyl, Pamelor and others.

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Information & potential benefits

TCA's are a special type of medication that were among the first medications used to treat depression. It was discovered over time that TCA's were effective at helping control chronic pain. The types of pain that TCA's are most effective at controlling include migraine headache prevention, neuropathy (nerve pain), Fibromyalgia and several others.

Potential risks and side effects

Common and basic side effects include dizziness, drowsiness, dry mouth, excitement, headache, impotence, nausea, nightmares, sensitivity to sunlight, sweating, tiredness, upset stomach, vomiting, weakness, weight loss or gain. Seek medical attention immediately if you experience the following, severe allergic reactions (rash; hives; difficulty breathing; tightness in the chest; swelling of the mouth, face, lips, or tongue); blurred vision or other vision changes; chest pain; confusion; constipation; fainting; fast, slow, or irregular heartbeat; fever; frequent or difficult urination; hallucinations; impulsive behavior, unusual changes in behavior; jaw, neck, or muscle spasms; mental or mood changes panic attacks; ringing in the ears; seizures; severe dizziness; stomach pain; suicidal thinking or behavior; swelling of the testicles; tremor; trouble sleeping; trouble walking or keeping your balance; twitching of the face or tongue; uncontrolled movements of arms and legs or stiffness; unusual bleeding or bruising; worsening of depression; yellowing of the skin or eyes. **TCA's must be taken as directed as even a slight overdose can be fatal.** TCA's can interact with a large number of other medications, please check with your pharmacist to make sure your medications don't interact. Do not stop taking this medication abruptly.

Dosing information

The smallest dose that achieves relief should be used. Medication should be started at small doses and gradually increased to get to desired effect, and avoid side effects.

Important information

Disclaimer: This is for informational purposes only. This does not replace the instructions you received from your provider, does not constitute initiation of medical treatment or establishment of a patient-physician relationship, does not constitute any form of recommendation, prescription or medical advice, and does not imply that the medication is appropriate or FDA approved for any condition. This information is not a complete listing of instructions, doses, uses or side effects. If this was prescribed to you, you must review this information with your pharmacist and prescriber before starting the medication. Any medication may interfere with the ability to drive, concentrate or operate machinery; patients must be responsible for their own behavior and should not engage in any dangerous activity if there is any question of impairment. All medications have side effects and drug interactions, some serious, some fatal. Let all of your practitioners and pharmacists know about every substance used. Alcohol, herbals or illegal drugs are not considered safe with these medications. Assume no medication is safe during pregnancy or while breast feeding. The medication may interfere with birth control. Almost any medication can cause sleepiness, insomnia, dizziness, confusion, hallucinations, anxiety, panic, constipation or diarrhea, headache, chest pain and nausea or vomiting, among others. Most medications should NOT be stopped suddenly because of the risk of withdrawal.