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INFORMATION ON AMITRIPTYLINE

What is Amitriptyline?

- Amitriptyline is a type of anti-depressant. It is also used for many other uses including treating various scalp symptoms associated with pain, itching and burning. This includes post herpetic neuralgia, chronic pain and scalp dysesthesia.
- The doses used for treating depression are much higher than those used for treating nerve symptoms (150 mg per day compared to only 10-50 mg per day for scalp symptoms)

How is Amitriptyline prescribed for nerve symptoms?

- It is prescribed at a dose of 10-20 mg taken at nighttime to begin
- You should not stop suddenly, but rather taper slowly when you want to get off this medicine

Who should not use Amitriptyline?

- Anyone who is allergic to amitriptyline
- Anyone who is taking an MAO inhibitor drug (phenelzine)
- Anyone who had allergy to tricyclic antidepressant drugs in the past – including nortriptyline, desipramine or imipramine
- Anyone who has acute congestive heart failure
- Anyone who recently had a heart attack
- Anyone who is planning surgery soon

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What side effects are possible with Amitriptyline?

- Weight gain
- Dry mouth
- Change in appetite (either more or less)
- Drowsiness
- Muscle stiffness
- Nausea
- Constipation
- Nervousness
- Dizziness
- Blurred vision
- Increased eye pressures
- Urinary retention
- Insomnia
- Sexual dysfunction
- Rare side effects include
 - Tinnitus (ringing in the ears)
 - Low blood pressure
 - Mania/psychosis
 - Heart rhythm problems
 - Lip and mouth ulcers
 - Depression
 - Liver toxicity

What side effects should prompt any patient to STOP Amitriptyline and get medical advice?

One should stop immediately and get advice right away if they:

- Feel unwell
- Develop seizures
- Can't go to the washroom (can't urinate)
- Can't see
- Have symptoms of a severe allergic reaction (e.g., swelling of face and tongue, difficulty breathing, hives)
- Feel agitated
- Feel suicidal
- Feel that their heart rhythm seems abnormal

