

# PHARMACY

Drug Information

## Medications to Treat Migraines



### What are Migraines?

- A migraine is a type of headache that is often severe.
- Warning signs such as flashes of light, dizziness, or numbness may be experienced before these painful headaches.
- Migraines are often accompanied by severe nausea and vomiting, and extreme sensitivity to light and sound.

### What are the Medications Used to Treat Migraines?

Medication Class	Medication Name
For treatment	Simple Analgesics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paracetamol</li> </ul>
	Muscle Relaxants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orphenadrine (in Anarex)</li> <li>• Clonazepam</li> </ul>
	NSAIDs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Naproxen</li> <li>• Ibuprofen</li> <li>• Indomethacin</li> <li>• Mefenamic acid</li> </ul>
	Ergot Alkaloids <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ergotamine (Cafergot)</li> </ul>
	Triptans <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Naratriptan</li> <li>• Sumatriptan</li> <li>• Zolmitriptan</li> <li>• Eletriptan</li> </ul>
For prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amitriptyline</li> <li>• Propranolol</li> <li>• Nortriptyline</li> <li>• Flunarizine</li> <li>• Topiramate</li> <li>• Sodium valproate</li> </ul>
Medicines to relieve nausea/vomiting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Metoclopramide</li> <li>• Ondansetron</li> <li>• Prochlorperazine</li> </ul>

### How do the Medications Work?

- Medicines used for treatment relieve migraine symptoms (for example pain and vomiting) and preserve your ability to function in daily life.
- Medicines used for prevention help reduce the frequency, severity and duration of future attacks. It may also increase the effectiveness of medicines used in treatment of migraine attacks.

### How are the Medications Administered / Taken?

- These medicines are to be taken as prescribed by your doctor.
- If you miss a dose, take the missed dose as soon as you remember. If it is almost time for your next dose, take only the usual dose. Never take a double dosage to make up for the missed dose.
- Medicines used for prevention are to be taken daily. It may take some time for these medications to show any benefit. Therefore, it is important not to give them up too quickly.
- Medicines used for treatment are best taken early at the onset of a migraine attack.
- Do not take ergotamine preparations concurrently with triptans unless prescribed by your doctor.
- Avoid taking medicines used for treatment more than three times a week, as this may cause rebound headaches.

### Can the Medications be Administered / Taken With Other Medications?

- It is important that you inform the doctor, pharmacist or nurse about other medications – including over-the-counter medications, supplements and traditional/herbal remedies – that you are currently taking, as they may affect the way you benefit from your migraine medications.

### What are the Important Side Effects?

- Medications prescribed by your doctor should be beneficial for your condition, although they may also result in side effects.
- It is important that you recognise the side effects of your medication(s) and know how to manage them.

Medication Class/Medication	Side Effect	Management
Muscle relaxants (orphenadrine, clonazepam)	Drowsiness Body weakness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid driving or performing tasks that require alertness.</li> </ul>
NSAIDs	Gastric pain/ulcers, especially if medication is taken in large doses or for a long period of time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not consume beyond the duration advised by your doctor.</li> <li>• Take after meals. If required, your doctor may prescribe gastric protectant.</li> <li>• Consult your doctor if you experience prolonged gastric pain.</li> </ul>
Ergot Alkaloids (Cafergot)	Tingling sensation/ numbness/pain at hands and legs with large doses  Nausea/Vomiting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not exceed prescribed dose.</li> <li>• Consult your doctor if you experience chest pain, shortness of breath, prolonged unusual pain or numbness in your hands and legs.</li> </ul>
Triptans	Dizziness Flushing Muscle weakness and tingling sensation Nausea Numbness/pain at hands and legs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not exceed prescribed dose.</li> <li>• Consult your doctor if you experience chest pain, shortness of breath, prolonged unusual pain or numbness at hands and legs.</li> </ul>

Amitriptyline / Nortriptyline	Dizziness Dry eyes/dry mouth Urinary retention Constipation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid driving or performing tasks that require alertness.</li> <li>• Increase fibre and water intake for bowel movement.</li> <li>• Use lubricant eye drops for dry eyes.</li> </ul>
Propranolol	Low blood pressure Slow heart beat Cold hands and legs Rarely may cause shortness of breath in asthmatics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change positions slowly to minimise light-headedness.</li> <li>• Consult your doctor if you experience shortness of breath, prolonged dizziness.</li> </ul>
Flunarizine	Drowsiness Heartburn/stomach ache Muscle ache Unusual tiredness/weakness Weight gain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid driving or performing tasks that require alertness.</li> <li>• Change positions slowly to minimise light-headedness.</li> </ul>
Topiramate	Drowsiness Insomnia Decreased appetite Numbness/tingling sensations Diarrhoea Rarely may cause kidney stones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid driving or performing tasks requiring alertness.</li> <li>• Consult your doctor if you experience difficult and painful urination.</li> </ul>

Sodium valproate	Drowsiness Nausea Transient fine tremors Rarely may cause liver impairment ( <i>watch for jaundice</i> ) Low platelets ( <i>watch for abnormal bruising</i> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take after meals.</li> <li>• Avoid driving or performing tasks that require alertness.</li> <li>• Consult your doctor if you experience severe abdominal pain, abnormal bruising or signs of jaundice.</li> </ul>
Medicines to relieve nausea/vomiting (metoclopramide, ondansetron, prochlorperazine)	Drowsiness Rarely may cause abnormal uncontrolled writhing movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid driving or performing tasks that require alertness.</li> <li>• Consult your doctor if you experience unusual uncontrolled movements.</li> </ul>

If you develop rashes, facial swelling or shortness of breath after taking the medication, you could be allergic to the medication. Please seek medical attention immediately.

#### Are There any Special Precautions That I Need to Take?

- Before taking this medicine, inform your doctor if you are:
  - Allergic to this medicine or other medicines
  - Pregnant or planning to get pregnant
  - Breast-feeding
  - Having any other disease conditions (e.g. asthma, present/previous gastric bleeding or ulcers)
  - Taking other prescription or non-prescription medicines e.g. monoamine oxidase inhibitors (MAOIs)

#### What Else can I do to Help My Condition?

- Avoid stress and known triggers
- Practise good sleep hygiene
- Keep a diary log of your headache, trigger and medicines or techniques (such as avoiding light and noise) that help resolve the headache.

## How do I Store These Medications?

- Store your medication in a cool, dry place away from heat, moisture and direct sunlight.
- Do not keep different types of medicines together in one container. Keep each medicine separately in its original labelled container.

If you have any problem with your treatment, please contact your doctor, pharmacist or nurse clinician.

Please keep all medications out of reach of children.



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