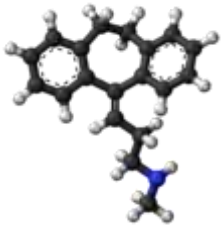


Nortriptyline (say: nor-trip-tea-lean)



What is nortriptyline?

- Nortriptyline is mainly used to help the symptoms of depression (by reducing the time it takes to recover and to help stop the symptoms coming back)
- Sometimes it is also used for nerve pain (neuropathic pain), insomnia (at a low dose), or bed wetting
- In childhood depression other medication is usually used before nortriptyline
- Nortriptyline is made as a tablet and is also known as Allegron[®].

What does nortriptyline help?

- Nortriptyline can help many symptoms, such as feeling low and having trouble getting off to sleep, pain which has not improved with other treatment, bed wetting.
- For depression, about 2 in 3 (65%) of people get better with a first antidepressant
- If that doesn't work or because it has too many side effects, then switching to a second antidepressant helps about half of those people (total of about 75%, or 3 in 4 people)
- There are more options after that e.g. other medicines and therapies.



How and when should I take nortriptyline?

- Swallow the tablets with at least half a glass of water while you are sitting or standing, so they reach the stomach and do not stick in your throat
- If the label says once a day this is usually best taken at bed time.

How long will I have to wait before it works?

- This will depend on what you are taking it for
- The effect usually starts in a week or two, and builds over the next couple of weeks.



How long will I need to keep taking nortriptyline for?

- This will depend on what you are taking it for.
- For depression, if an antidepressant has got you better:
 - First episode: Taking it for 6 months reduces the chances of becoming depressed again
 - Second episode: Taking it for 1-2yrs reduces the chances of becoming depressed again.

Been depressed before but antidepressants don't help much? Ever been irritable, disinhibited, overactive, not sleeping, overspent, disinhibited? Bipolar in the family? If so, it's worth asking: "Could it be bipolar?"

Can I stop taking nortriptyline suddenly?

- It is best not to do this. Talk it over first with other people e.g. your family or your doctor, case manager or pharmacist
- It normally works out better if you stop medicines in a planned way at a time when your stress levels are low, rather than e.g. around exam times, mid-winter and life events
- Your symptoms can return if treatment is stopped too early. This may occur some weeks or even months after nortriptyline has been stopped
- You should come off nortriptyline by a gradual drop in dose over several weeks
- You might also get some discontinuation symptoms such as 'flu-like symptoms, and sleep disturbance (e.g. more vivid dreams). They can start 2-4 days after stopping, usually only last a few weeks (but can be a bit longer) and will go if nortriptyline is started again.



What should I do if I forget to take a dose of nortriptyline at the right time?










- Take the missed dose as soon as you remember unless it is within about 12 hours of your next dose. If you remember after this time, just take the next dose as normal
- Do not try to catch up by taking two doses at once as you may get more side effects.

Can I cycle, drive or operate a boat while I am taking nortriptyline?


- You may feel a bit sleepy, light-headed or have blurred vision at first
- Until this wears off, or you know how nortriptyline affects you, be careful cycling and do not drive or operate machines.



What sort of side-effects might I get with nortriptyline?

Very common (more than about 1 in 10 people might get these)	
 <p>Constipation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When you want to poop but can't Make sure you eat enough fibre, cereals or fruit and you drink enough fluid, and keep active If this does not help, ask your doctor or pharmacist for a mild laxative. 	 <p>Dry mouth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not much saliva or spit Suck sugar-free lollies or gum See your doctor if it gets too bad.
 <p>Weight gain</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eating more, putting on weight A diet full of cereal, vegetables and fibre may help prevent weight gain. 	 <p>Blurred vision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Things look fuzzy, you can't focus your eyes properly Do not drive until it wears off See your doctor if you are worried.
 <p>Fatigue and sleepiness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You feel tired or sleepy This may happen early on in treatment and usually wears off If you feel like this for more than a week after starting, tell your doctor It may be possible to adjust your dose slightly. 	
Common (fewer than about 1 in 10 people might get these)	
 <p>Postural hypotension</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is a drop in blood pressure when you stand up Stand up slowly Discuss this with your doctor next time you meet. 	
See your doctor if you get any of these rare side effects:	
 <p>Hyponatremia or "SIADH"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You do not pass much urine, are tired, confused, muscle cramps and you can get a headache This can be dangerous so contact your doctor now. 	 <p>Finding it hard to pass urine</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finding it hard having a wee or having to go more often Not being able to fully empty your bladder See your doctor as soon as possible A change in medicine may help.
 <p>Thoughts of harming yourself</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feeling anxious, restless, poor sleep and feeling you might want to harm yourself See your doctor in the next day, especially if you are under about 20 years old, started the medicine in the last few weeks, have had a dose change or may have bipolar depression. 	

This table shows some of the most common side effects and any you might need to take action on. You **must** also see the maker's Consumer Medicine Information (CMI) Leaflet for the full list of possible side effects but do not be worried by this. Some side effects are the brain getting used to a medicine and these usually wear off in a few days or weeks. Starting at a lower dose may help. If you think you might have a side effect, you should ask your doctor, pharmacist or case manager.

 **Lifeline** provides 24hr telephone crisis support on 13 11 14 or visit www.lifeline.org.au for information & downloads

The small print: This leaflet is to help you understand more about nortriptyline. You **must** read the manufacturer's Consumer Medicine Information (CMI) Leaflet. Beware that internet-based information is not always accurate. Do not share medicines with anyone else.

V10.02 [SRB 12-2022; RRDM1122] ©2022 MisturaTM Enterprise Ltd (www.choiceandmedication.org). Choice and MedicationTM indemnity applies only to licensed subscribing organisations and the personal use by that organisation's service users and carers. Use by non-subscribing organisations or individuals is prohibited