

Medication Information

Cyclic Antidepressants

Other names for this medication

Amitriptyline

Amoxapine

Clomipramine

Desipramine

Doxepin

Imipramine

Maprotiline

Nortriptyline

Trimipramine

How this medication is used

This medication improves mood and treats depression and anxiety disorders. Some of the medications in this group may also be used to treat conditions such as pain, migraine headaches and difficulty sleeping. Ask your doctor or health care provider if you are not sure why you are taking this medication.

It may take up to 4 weeks before you get the full effect of this medication.

If you are pregnant or planning to become pregnant, talk to your doctor or health care provider about the risks and benefits of taking this medication.

How to take this medication

Take this medication exactly as directed by your doctor. If you take this medication once a day, take it at bedtime.

Do not stop taking this medication without checking with your doctor first.

How to take this medication (continued)

If you miss a dose of this medication, take it as soon as possible. However, if it is almost time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your regular schedule.

Do not take 2 doses at one time. If a once daily bedtime dose is missed, do not take it in the morning since it may cause drowsiness.

While taking this medication you may notice

- dry mouth
- trouble sleeping
- weight gain
- dizziness
- you feel more tired or weak
- blurred vision for up to 1 week
- increased sensitivity to heat and sun
- constipation
- increased appetite
- drowsiness

Most of these side effects will go away as your body gets used to the medication.

To help dry mouth, try sucking sugar-free candy or chewing sugar-free gum. Sucking on ice chips also helps if you are not on a limited fluid diet. Good care of your teeth is very important at this time.

To avoid feeling dizzy, get up slowly when you have been sitting or lying down. If you feel dizzy, sit or lie down until you are no longer dizzy, then get up slowly.

To prevent constipation, eat food high in fibre, drink 6 to 8 glasses of liquid each day and exercise regularly. Food high in fibre includes whole grain products, vegetables and fruit.

While taking this medication you may notice (continued)

This medication increases the effects of alcohol, making you more sleepy, dizzy and lightheaded. Do not drink alcohol such as wine, beer or liquor while taking this medication.

This medication can make you feel drowsy. Until you know how this medication makes you feel, do not drive or operate machinery.

To avoid weight gain, follow a healthy diet and exercise plan. Talk to your doctor or dietitian for help.

If your skin becomes more sensitive to sunlight, avoid direct sunlight. While in the sun, wear sunblock and sunglasses that block ultraviolet (UV) light, a hat, and clothing that covers your skin.

Contact your doctor if you notice

- blurred vision for more than 1 week
- problems passing urine
- severe constipation
- you are less interested or able to have sex
- your heartbeat is not regular
- continued restlessness
- muscle tremor
- continued muscle stiffness
- signs of infection such as sore throat, fever, chills
- behavioural or emotional changes, including thoughts of self-harm or suicide

Contact your pharmacist if you have any questions about your medication.