INFORMATION ON AMITRYPTYLINE

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 amitryptyline

• Anyone who is taking an MAO inhibitor drug (phenelzine)

• Anyone who had allergy to tricyclic antidepressant drugs in the past – including nortryptyline, desipramine or imipramine

• Anyone who has acute congestive heart failure

• Anyone who recently had a heart attack

• Anyone who is planning surgery soon
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