PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Amitriptyline

This information from UpToDate® Lexidrug™ explains what you need to know about this medication, including what it's used for, how to take it, its side effects, and when to call your healthcare provider.

Brand Names: Canada

AG-Amitriptyline; Amitriptyline-10; Amitriptyline-25; APO-Amitriptyline; Elavil; JAMP-Amitriptyline; Mar-Amitriptyline; PMS-Amitriptyline; TEVA-Amitriptyline [DSC]

Warning

- Drugs like this one have raised the chance of suicidal thoughts or actions in children and young adults. The risk may be greater in people who have had these thoughts or actions in the past. All people who take this drug need to be watched closely. Call the doctor right away if signs like depression, nervousness, restlessness, grouchiness, panic attacks, or changes in mood or actions are new or worse. Call the doctor right away if any thoughts or actions of suicide occur.
- This drug is not approved for use in children. Talk with the doctor.

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat depression.
- It may be given to your child for other reasons. Talk with the doctor.

What do I need to tell the doctor BEFORE my child takes this drug?

- If your child is allergic to this drug; any part of this drug; or any other drugs, foods, or substances. Tell the doctor about the allergy and what signs your child had.
- If your child has had a recent heart attack.
- If your child has taken certain drugs for depression or certain other health problems in the last 14 days. This includes isocarboxazid, phenelzine, or tranylcypromine. Very high blood pressure may happen.
- If your child is taking any of these drugs: Linezolid or methylene blue.
- If your child is taking cisapride.

This is not a list of all drugs or health problems that interact with this drug.

Tell the doctor and pharmacist about all of your child's drugs (prescription or OTC, natural products, vitamins) and health problems. You must check to make sure that it is safe to give this drug with all of your child's other drugs and health problems. Do not start, stop, or change the dose of any drug your child takes without checking with the doctor.

What are some things I need to know or do while my child takes this drug?

- Tell all of your child's health care providers that your child is taking this drug. This includes your child's doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists. This drug may need to be stopped before certain types of surgery as the doctor has told you. If this drug is stopped, the doctor will tell you when to start giving this drug again after your child's surgery or procedure.
- Have your child avoid tasks or actions that call for alertness until you see how this drug affects your child. These are things like riding a bike, playing sports, or using items such as scissors, lawnmowers, electric scooters, toy cars, or motorized vehicles.
- To lower the chance of feeling dizzy or passing out, have your child rise

slowly if your child has been sitting or lying down. Have your child be careful going up and down stairs.

- Do not stop giving this drug to your child all of a sudden without calling the doctor. Your child may have a greater risk of signs of withdrawal. If your child needs to stop this drug, you will want to slowly stop it as ordered by the doctor.
- If your child has high blood sugar (diabetes), you will need to watch your child's blood sugar closely.
- Alcohol may interact with this drug. Be sure your child does not drink alcohol.
- Talk with your child's doctor before your child uses marijuana, other forms of cannabis, or prescription or OTC drugs that may slow your child's actions.
- This drug may make your child sunburn more easily. Use care if your child will be in the sun. Tell your child's doctor if your child sunburns easily while taking this drug.
- Have your child be careful in hot weather or while your child is being active. Have your child drink lots of fluids to stop fluid loss.

If your child is pregnant or breast-feeding a baby:

- Talk with the doctor if your child is pregnant, becomes pregnant, or is breast-feeding a baby. You will need to talk about the benefits and risks to your child and the baby.

What are some side effects that I need to call my child's doctor about right away?

WARNING/CAUTION: Even though it may be rare, some people may have very bad and sometimes deadly side effects when taking a drug. Tell your child's doctor or get medical help right away if your child has any of the following signs or symptoms that may be related to a very bad side effect:

- Signs of an allergic reaction, like rash; hives; itching; red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin with or without fever; wheezing; tightness in the chest or throat; trouble breathing, swallowing, or talking; unusual hoarseness; or

swelling of the mouth, face, lips, tongue, or throat.

- Signs of high or low blood pressure like very bad headache or dizziness, passing out, or change in eyesight.
- Signs of liver problems like dark urine, tiredness, decreased appetite, upset stomach or stomach pain, light-colored stools, throwing up, or yellow skin or eyes.
- Weakness on 1 side of the body, trouble speaking or thinking, change in balance, drooping on one side of the face, or blurred eyesight.
- Chest pain or pressure, a fast heartbeat, or an abnormal heartbeat.
- Feeling confused, not able to focus, or change in behavior.
- Trouble passing urine.
- Fever, chills, or sore throat; any unexplained bruising or bleeding; or feeling very tired or weak.
- Swelling.
- Shakiness.
- Seizures.
- Hallucinations (seeing or hearing things that are not there).
- A burning, numbness, or tingling feeling that is not normal.
- Swelling of the testicles.
- Enlarged breasts or nipple discharge.
- Severe constipation or stomach pain. These may be signs of a severe bowel problem.
- Not sweating during activities or in warm temperatures.
- Trouble sleeping.
- Bad dreams.
- Ringing in ears.
- Change in tongue color.
- Sweating a lot.

- Joint pain.
- Hair loss.
- Tell your child's doctor if your child has signs of high or low blood sugar like breath that smells like fruit, dizziness, fast breathing, fast heartbeat, feeling confused, feeling sleepy, feeling weak, flushing, headache, unusual thirst or hunger, passing urine more often, shaking, or sweating.
- Some people may have a higher chance of eye problems with this drug. The doctor may want your child to have an eye exam to see if your child has a higher chance of these eye problems. Call the doctor right away if your child has eye pain, change in eyesight, or swelling or redness in or around the eye.
- Some people may get a severe muscle problem called tardive dyskinesia. This problem may lessen or go away after stopping this drug, but it may not go away. The risk is greater with diabetes and in older adults, especially older females. The risk is greater with longer use or higher doses, but it may also occur after short-term use with low doses. Call your child's doctor right away if your child has trouble controlling body movements or problems with the tongue, face, mouth, or jaw like tongue sticking out, puffing cheeks, mouth puckering, or chewing.

If your child is or may be sexually active:

- Not able to get or keep an erection.
- Change in sex interest.

What are some other side effects of this drug?

All drugs may cause side effects. However, many people have no side effects or only have minor side effects. Call your child's doctor or get medical help if any of these side effects or any other side effects bother your child or do not go away:

- Constipation, diarrhea, stomach pain, upset stomach, throwing up, or decreased appetite.
- Feeling dizzy, sleepy, tired, or weak.

- Dry mouth.
- Headache.
- Anxiety.
- Feeling nervous and excitable.
- Change in taste.
- Weight gain or loss.
- Mouth sores.

These are not all of the side effects that may occur. If you have questions about side effects, call your child's doctor. Call your child's doctor for medical advice about side effects.

You may report side effects to your national health agency.

How is this drug best given?

Give this drug as ordered by your child's doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

- Give at bedtime if your child is taking it once a day.
- Keep giving this drug to your child as you have been told by your child's doctor or other health care provider, even if your child feels well.

What do I do if my child misses a dose?

- Give a missed dose as soon as you think about it.
- If it is close to the time for your child's next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your child's normal time.
- Do not give 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.

How do I store and/or throw out this drug?

- Store at room temperature in a dry place. Do not store in a bathroom.
- Keep all drugs in a safe place. Keep all drugs out of the reach of children and pets.
- Throw away unused or expired drugs. Do not flush down a toilet or pour down a drain unless you are told to do so. Check with your pharmacist if you have questions about the best way to throw out drugs. There may be drug take-back programs in your area.

General drug facts

- If your child's symptoms or health problems do not get better or if they become worse, call your child's doctor.
- Do not share your child's drug with others and do not give anyone else's drug to your child.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your child's doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
- If you think there has been an overdose, call your poison control center or get medical care right away. Be ready to tell or show what was taken, how much, and when it happened.

Consumer Information Use and Disclaimer

This generalized information is a limited summary of diagnosis, treatment, and/or medication information. It is not meant to be comprehensive and should be used as a tool to help the user understand and/or assess potential diagnostic and treatment options. It does NOT include all information about conditions, treatments, medications, side effects, or risks that may apply to a specific patient. It is not intended to be medical advice or a substitute for the medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment of a health care provider based on the health care provider's examination and assessment of a patient's specific and unique circumstances. Patients must speak with a health care provider for complete information about their health, medical questions, and treatment options,

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If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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