

Information Sheet for patients using Atenolol for Migraine Attacks

Background

Atenolol is a member of a group of drugs known as Beta-Blockers. These are widely used in a number of areas but particularly in cardiovascular medicine. They are also very effective in the prevention of migraine.

Side effects

No tablets are without side effects in a small number of people. The main problems associated with Beta-Blockers are fatigue and coldness of the hands and feet. They should not be used if you have asthma or bronchitis as they can make this condition worse. Please check with your doctor if you have any other problems that may prevent you from taking beta-blockers.

Pregnancy and breast-feeding:

Atenolol is not recommended during pregnancy or whilst breastfeeding. You should not take Atenolol if you are pregnant, planning a pregnancy or breastfeeding.

Taking the tablets

The normal doses range is between 25mg and 100mg. As migraine sufferers are often more sensitive to medication compared with non-sufferers, start at the 25mg dose. You should then increase in increments of 25mg every 2 weeks up to 100mg or the dose that you are free of side effects if these are problematic.

For how long should I take them?

You need to take the medication at the maximum dose you can tolerate for at least 6 weeks before a benefit can be judged. If there is a benefit then they should be taken for at least 6 months after which time you may like to discuss with your doctor whether you can withdraw them.

Although this medication is widely used by headache specialists and there is a large amount of experience with it, it should be noted that it is not licensed for use in headache.

This leaflet is intended to provide a brief overview of aspects of this treatment protocol. It is not intended as a substitute for the comprehensive 'product information' leaflet found inside all boxes of medication. The 'product information' leaflet should always be read before taking medication.

Your prescribing doctor will discuss the risks and benefits of the medication as it relates to you and answer any further questions you may have.