

Information for adult patients using Triptans for the relief of migraine headaches

Developed and reviewed by Dr Anne Coker

Developed: 09/2011 Review: 09/2013 LN0626 

Neurology Services

The aim of this leaflet is to give you information about using Triptans in the treatment of migraine headaches.

Triptans are very useful in the treatment of an acute migraine attack.

There are currently 7 different Triptans available for treating migraine. They are Almotriptan, Eletriptan, Frovatriptan, Naratriptan, Rizatriptan, Sumatriptan, and Solmitriptan.

If you have not had a good response with one triptan, it is worthwhile trying a different triptan as response can vary between preparations.

How to take a triptans?

- If other relievers such as Aspirin, Ibuprofen or Naproxen have not relieved your migraines, you may wish to consider using Triptans as these drugs can be useful in controlling migraine attacks.
- Triptans are available as tablets, nasal sprays (Sumatriptan and Zolmitriptan) and injection (Sumatriptan). Zolmitriptan nasal spray or Sumatriptan injection can be useful when there is marked nausea or vomiting with your migraines.

When do I take the triptans?

Triptans are best taken as soon as possible after onset of the headache and can be repeated after 2 hours if the migraine resolves and then recurs.

How often should I take triptans?

Triptans should not be used for more than 9 days per month to avoid the risk of developing medication overuse headaches.

What are the common side effects?

Most people tolerate triptans well. Side-effects are recognised and include sensations of tingling, heat, heaviness, pressure, or tightness of any part of the body (including throat and chest—discontinue and report to your doctor if intense). Flushing, dizziness, feeling of weakness, fatigue, nausea and vomiting can occur. For more information read the product information leaflet inside the box of tablets.

Do not take triptans if:

Triptans should not be used if you may be pregnant or are breastfeeding or have a history of angina or heart attack, stroke or uncontrolled or severe high blood pressure or if your migraine attacks are associated with weakness or paralysis of the face and/or arm and/or leg.

Triptans should be used with caution if you have other medical conditions which put you at increased risk of angina or heart attacks or if you suffer from liver disease.