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2. Amitriptyline

# Amitriptyline

**Pronunciation:** *a-mee-TRIP-ti-leen*

**Brand names:** [Elavil](#), Endep, [Vanatrip](#)

**Dosage form:** tablets (10mg, 25mg, 50mg, 75mg, 100mg, 150mg)

**Drug class:** [Tricyclic antidepressants](#)

Medically reviewed by [Melisa Puckey, BPharm](#). Last updated on Mar 4, 2024.

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## What is amitriptyline?

Amitriptyline is a tricyclic antidepressant used to treat symptoms of depression (FDA approved), and amitriptyline is used off-label for insomnia, migraine prevention, ADHD, eating disorders, bipolar disorder, anxiety, psychotic disorders, and some types of pain. Amitriptyline may work by increasing chemical messengers (neurotransmitters) serotonin and norepinephrine that communicate between brain cells and help regulate mood.

The first amitriptyline brand was Elavil, which was FDA-approved on April 7, 1961, and has since been discontinued. Other amitriptyline brand names include Vanatrip and Endep, which have also been discontinued. Amitriptyline is now available as a generic medication. Amitriptyline is from the drug class [tricyclic antidepressants](#) (TCA).

Amitriptyline is available in combination with chlordiazepoxide for the treatment of patients with moderate to severe depression associated with moderate to severe anxiety. Amitriptyline, in combination with perphenazine, is FDA-approved for types of severe anxiety and/or agitation.

## Amitriptyline side effects

### Common amitriptyline side effects

Common amitriptyline side effects may include dry mouth, vision changes, sleepiness (sedation), tiredness, appetite or weight changes, constipation, [diarrhea](#), nausea, [vomiting](#), [upset stomach](#), mouth pain, unusual taste, black tongue, urinating less than usual, breast swelling (in men or women), lower sex drive, [impotence](#), or difficulty having an orgasm.

### Serious amitriptyline side effects

**Allergic reactions:** Get emergency medical help if you have signs of an allergic reaction to amitriptyline, including difficulty breathing, hives, or swelling of your face, lips, tongue, or throat.

Report any new or worsening symptoms to your doctor, such as mood or behavior changes, [anxiety](#), [panic attacks](#), trouble sleeping, or if you feel impulsive, irritable, agitated, hostile, aggressive, restless, hyperactive (mentally or physically), more depressed, or have thoughts about suicide or hurting yourself.

Call your doctor at once if you have:

- signs of a blood clot - sudden numbness or weakness, problems with vision or speech, swelling or redness in an arm or leg;
- unusual thoughts or behavior;
- a light-headed feeling, like you might pass out;
- chest pain or pressure, pain spreading to your jaw or shoulder, [nausea](#), sweating;
- pounding heartbeats or fluttering in your chest;
- confusion, hallucinations;
- a seizure (convulsions);
- painful or difficult urination;
- severe [constipation](#);
- easy bruising, unusual bleeding, or
- fever, chills, [sore throat](#), mouth sores.

This is not a complete list of side effects and others may occur. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to the FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

 [Amitriptyline side effects](#) (more detail)

## Related/similar drugs

### Paracetamol

Paracetamol (Panadol, Calpol, Alvedon) is a widely used over-the-counter painkiller and fever ...

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### Diclofenac

Diclofenac is a nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug used to treat pain and inflammation associated ...

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Oxycodone is an opioid analgesic used to treat moderate to severe pain; it has a high potential for ...

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### Propranolol

Propranolol is a beta-blocker that is used to treat tremors, chest pain, high blood pressure, heart ...

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### Naproxen

Naproxen is a nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug used to treat pain or inflammation caused by ...

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### Tramadol

— Tramadol is a synthetic opiate analgesic used to treat moderate to severe pain.

Tramadol is an opioid medication that may be used to treat moderate to moderately severe chronic ...

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### Duloxetine

Duloxetine is a selective serotonin and norepinephrine reuptake inhibitor antidepressant used to ...

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### Sertraline

Sertraline (Zoloft) is an SSRI used to treat depression, anxiety, OCD, PTSD, and PMDD by increasing ...

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### Trazodone

Trazodone is a tetracyclic antidepressant used to treat depression and anxiety disorders. Includes ...

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## Warnings

You should not use amitriptyline if you have recently had a [heart attack](#).

Do not use amitriptyline if you have used an MAO inhibitor in the past 14 days, such as [isocarboxazid](#), [linezolid](#), [methylene blue](#) injection, [phenelzine](#), [rasagiline](#), [selegiline](#), or [tranylcypromine](#).

You may have thoughts about suicide when you first start taking an antidepressant such as amitriptyline, especially if you are younger than 24 years old. Your doctor will need to check you at regular visits for at least the first 12 weeks of treatment.

Report any new or worsening symptoms to your doctor, such as: mood or behavior changes, anxiety, panic attacks, trouble sleeping, or if you feel impulsive, irritable, agitated, hostile, aggressive, restless, hyperactive (mentally or physically), more depressed, or have thoughts about suicide or hurting yourself.

Amitriptyline may trigger an angle closure glaucoma attack in a patient with anatomically narrow angles who does not have a patent iridectomy.

## Before taking this medicine

You should not use this medicine if you are allergic to amitriptyline or any of the inactive ingredients or:

- if you have recently had a heart attack.

Do not use amitriptyline if you have used an MAO inhibitor in the past 14 days. A dangerous drug interaction could occur. MAO inhibitors include isocarboxazid, linezolid, methylene blue injection, phenelzine, rasagiline, selegiline, tranylcypromine, and others.

Tell your doctor if you have used an "SSRI" antidepressant in the past 5 weeks, such as [citalopram](#), [escitalopram](#), [fluoxetine](#) (Prozac), [fluvoxamine](#), [paroxetine](#), [sertraline](#) (Zoloft), [trazodone](#), or [vilazodone](#).

To make sure amitriptyline is safe for you, tell your doctor if you have ever had:

- [bipolar disorder](#) (manic-depression) or [schizophrenia](#);
- mental illness or psychosis;
- liver disease;
- heart disease;
- a heart attack, stroke, or [seizures](#);
- diabetes (amitriptyline may raise or lower blood sugar);
- [glaucoma](#); or
- problems with urination.

Some young people have thoughts about suicide when first taking an antidepressant. Your doctor should check your progress at regular visits. Your family or other caregivers should also be alert to changes in your mood or symptoms.

Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or breastfeeding.

Amitriptyline is not approved for use by anyone younger than 12 years old.

 [Amitriptyline pregnancy and breastfeeding warnings](#) (more detail)

# How should I take amitriptyline?

Take amitriptyline exactly as prescribed by your doctor. Follow all directions on your prescription label and read all medication guides or instruction sheets. Your doctor may occasionally change your dose.

It may take up to 4 weeks before your symptoms improve. Keep using the medication as directed and tell your doctor if your symptoms do not improve.

If you need surgery, tell your surgeon you currently use amitriptyline. You may need to stop for a short time.

Do not stop using amitriptyline suddenly, or you could have unpleasant withdrawal symptoms. Ask your doctor how to safely stop using amitriptyline.

Store at room temperature away from moisture and heat. Keep the bottle tightly closed when not in use.

 [Amitriptyline patient tips](#) (more detail)

## Amitriptyline Dosing information

### Usual Adult Amitriptyline Dose for Depression:

#### Outpatients:

- Initial dose: 75 mg orally per day in divided doses; this may be increased to 150 mg/day (if needed)
- Maintenance dose: 40 to 100 mg orally per day
- Maximum dose: 150 mg/day
- Alternate outpatient treatment regimen: 50 to 100 mg orally as a single dose at bedtime; this may be increased by 25 or 50 mg as needed at bedtime to a total of 150 mg/day

#### Inpatients:

- Initial dose: 100 mg orally per day
- Maintenance dose: 40 to 100 mg orally as a single dose at bedtime
- Maximum dose: 300 mg/day

#### Comments:

- Dose increases should preferably be made in the late afternoon or at bedtime due to the sedative effect.
- The full therapeutic effect may take as long as 30 days to develop.
- Maintenance doses should be reduced to the lowest amount that will maintain relief of symptoms when satisfactory improvement has been obtained.
- Maintenance therapy should be continued for 3 months or longer to lessen the possibility of relapse.

### Usual Geriatric Dose for Depression:

**Dose:** 10 mg orally 3 times a day AND 20 mg orally once a day at bedtime

#### Comments:

- The full therapeutic effect may take as long as 30 days to develop.
- Elderly patients should be monitored carefully and serum levels obtained as clinically appropriate.
- Dose adjustments should be made according to clinical response.

## Usual Pediatric Dose for Depression:

**Amitriptyline dose 12 years or older:** 10 mg orally 3 times a day AND 20 mg orally once a day at bedtime

### Comments:

- The full therapeutic effect may take as long as 30 days to develop.
- Dose adjustments should be made according to clinical response.

**Available as** amitriptyline 10mg tablets, amitriptyline 25mg tablets, 50mg tablets, 75mg tablets 100mg tablets and 150mg tablets.

 [Detailed Amitriptyline dosage information](#)

## What happens if I miss a dose?

Take the medicine as soon as you can, but skip the missed dose if it is almost time for your next dose. Do not take two doses at one time.

## What happens if I overdose?

Seek emergency medical attention or call the Poison Help line at 1-800-222-1222. **An overdose of amitriptyline can be fatal.**

Overdose symptoms may include irregular heart rhythm, feeling like you might pass out, seizures, or coma.

## What to avoid

**Do not drink alcohol.** Dangerous side effects or death can occur when alcohol is combined with amitriptyline.

Avoid driving or hazardous activity until you know how amitriptyline will affect you. Your reactions could be impaired.

Avoid exposure to sunlight or tanning beds. Amitriptyline can make you sunburn more easily. Wear protective clothing and use sunscreen (SPF 30 or higher) when you are outdoors.

## What other drugs will affect amitriptyline?

Taking amitriptyline with other drugs that make you sleepy can worsen this effect. Ask your doctor before taking amitriptyline with a sleeping pill, narcotic pain medicine, muscle relaxer, or medicine for anxiety, depression, or seizures.

Sometimes it is not safe to use certain medications at the same time. Some drugs can affect your blood levels of other drugs you take, which may increase side effects or make the medications less effective.

Tell your doctor about all your other medicines, especially:

- other [antidepressants](#);
- medicine to treat depression, anxiety, mood disorders, or mental illness;
- cold or allergy medicine (Benadryl and others);
- medicine to treat [Parkinson's disease](#);
- medicine to treat stomach problems, [motion sickness](#), or [irritable bowel syndrome](#);
- medicine to treat [overactive bladder](#); or
- bronchodilator [asthma](#) medication.

This list is not complete. Other drugs may affect amitriptyline, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, [vitamins](#), and [herbal products](#). Not all possible drug interactions are listed here.

 [Amitriptyline drug interactions](#) (more detail)

## Does amitriptyline interact with my other drugs?

Enter medications to view a detailed interaction report using our [Drug Interaction Checker](#).

amitriptyline

+






Enter a drug name

Add

## Storage

Store at 20-25°C (68 -77°F); excursions permitted to 15-30 °C (59-86 °F). [See USP Controlled Room Temperature].

## Popular FAQ

- How long does amitriptyline take to work? 
- Does amitriptyline cause weight gain? 
- Does amitriptyline cause high blood pressure? 
- How long does amitriptyline stay in your system? 
- Is amitriptyline addictive? 

## More FAQ

- [What are some common side effects of antidepressants?](#)



## More about amitriptyline

- [Check interactions](#)
- [Compare alternatives](#)
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## Patient resources

### Other brands

[Elavil](#), [Vanatrip](#)

## Professional resources

- [Amitriptyline monograph](#)
- [Amitriptyline \(FDA\)](#)

### Other brands

[Elavil](#)

## Related treatment guides

- [Chronic Pain](#)
- [Anxiety and Stress](#)
- [Chronic Myofascial Pain](#)
- [Burning Mouth Syndrome](#)

## Further information

Remember, keep this and all other medicines out of the reach of children, never share your medicines with others, and use amitriptyline only for the indication prescribed.

Always consult your healthcare provider to ensure the information displayed on this page applies to your personal


circumstances.

[Medical Disclaimer](#)


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DRUG STATUS

**Availability**  
**Rx** Prescription only

**Pregnancy & Lactation**  
 Risk data available

**CSA Schedule\***  
**N/A** Not a controlled drug

**Approval History**  
 Drug history at FDA



User Reviews & Ratings

7.5 / 10

[1,803 Reviews](#)

Images

[Amitriptyline Hydrochloride 25 mg \(I2\)](#)



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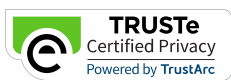
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