

Medication Information Sheet



Memantine

brands: Namenda®

Medications are only ONE part of a successful treatment plan. They are appropriate when they provide benefit, improve function and have either no or mild, manageable side effects. Importantly, medications (even if natural) are chemical substances not expected in the body, and as such have side effects. Some of the side effects might be unknown. The use of medications/drugs for any purpose requires patient consent. This practice does NOT require a patient to use any medication.

Information & potential benefits

Namenda is a medication in a class by itself. It is FDA approved as a treatment for the memory loss of Alzheimer disease and it works by blocking NMDA receptors. NMDA receptors are also involved in pain perception. Activation of NMDA receptors occurs in chronic pain and may be associated with the wind-up phenomenon (worsening pain) and with tolerance (needing more and more medication to stop pain). Other NMDA receptor blockers are used in pain management. Although not FDA approved for pain, Namenda appears helpful in clinical experience for some patients with daily headaches and with other pain syndromes. The use of Namenda for pain is investigational. This means that insurance companies may NOT pay for the medication.

Potential risks and side effects

In addition to the general side effects listed in the disclaimer, the most common side effects from Namenda are dizziness, confusion, headache and constipation. The dose should be reduced if there is any kidney damage. Because the medication undergoes minimal change in the body, it is less likely to interfere with other medications; still, caution is appropriate when multiple medications are used. At this time there are no recommendations for routine blood monitoring.

Dosing information

Please note that the use of this medication for pain is based on clinical information from pain centers. Clinical studies are underway and the results are not known. Our experience is that approximately 50% of patients experience a significant benefit from the medication; the other 50% do not.

Important information

Disclaimer: This is for informational purposes only. This does not replace the instructions you received from your provider, does not constitute initiation of medical treatment or establishment of a patient-physician relationship, does not constitute any form of recommendation, prescription or medical advice, and does not imply that the medication is appropriate or FDA approved for any condition. This information is not a complete listing of instructions, doses, uses or side effects. If this was prescribed to you, you must review this information with your pharmacist and prescriber before starting the medication. Any medication may interfere with the ability to drive, concentrate or operate machinery; patients must be responsible for their own behavior and should not engage in any dangerous activity if there is any question of impairment. All medications have side effects and drug interactions, some serious, some fatal. Let all of your practitioners and pharmacists know about every substance used. Alcohol, herbals or illegal drugs are not considered safe with these medications. Assume no medication is safe during pregnancy or while breast feeding. The medication may interfere with birth control. Almost any medication can cause sleepiness, insomnia, dizziness, confusion, hallucinations, anxiety, panic, constipation or diarrhea, headache, chest pain and nausea or vomiting, among others. Most medications should NOT be stopped suddenly because of the risk of withdrawal.