

Consumer Medicine Information

Nortriptyline NRIM

Nortriptyline (as hydrochloride)

10 mg & 25 mg Tablets

What is in this leaflet

Please read this leaflet carefully before you start taking Nortriptyline NRIM.

This leaflet answers some common questions about Nortriptyline NRIM. It does not contain all the available information. The most up-to-date Consumer Medicine Information can be downloaded from www.medsafe.govt.nz.

Reading this leaflet does not take the place of talking to your doctor or pharmacist.

All medicines have risks and benefits. Your doctor has weighed the risks of you taking Nortriptyline NRIM against the benefits this medicine is expected to have for you.

If you have any concerns about taking this medicine, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

Keep this leaflet with the medicine.

You may want to read it again.

What Nortriptyline NRIM is used for

Nortriptyline NRIM contains nortriptyline hydrochloride. It belongs to a group of medicines known as tricyclic antidepressants (TCAs).

Nortriptyline NRIM is used to treat depression. Depression is thought to be caused by a chemical imbalance in parts of the brain. This affects your whole body and can cause emotional and physical symptoms such as feeling low in spirit, loss of interest in activities, being unable to enjoy life, poor appetite or overeating, disturbed sleep, often waking up early, loss of sex drive, lack of energy and feeling guilty over nothing.

Nortriptyline works by correcting this chemical imbalance and may help relieve the symptoms of depression.

Nortriptyline is also used as an aid to smoking cessation and may help you stop smoking.

Your doctor may have prescribed this medicine for another reason.

Ask your doctor if you have any questions about why it has been prescribed for you.

Nortriptyline NRIM is available only with a doctor's prescription.

Before you take Nortriptyline NRIM

Nortriptyline NRIM is not suitable for everyone.

When you must not take it

Do not take Nortriptyline NRIM if you:

- are taking another medicine for depression called a monoamine oxidase inhibitor (MAOI) or have been taking a MAOI within the last 14 days.

Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you are unsure as to whether you are taking a MAOI.

- suffer from night-time incontinence (bed-wetting)
- have recently had a heart attack.

Do not take Nortriptyline NRIM if you are allergic to any medicine containing nortriptyline or other tricyclic antidepressant medicines, or any of the ingredients listed at the end of this leaflet.

Nortriptyline is not recommended for use in children 12 years of age and under.

Nortriptyline is not recommended for use in adolescents (13 - 18 years of age) for the treatment of depression, unless under the supervision of a specialist.

Nortriptyline is not recommended for use in adolescents (under 18 years of age) as an aid in smoking cessation.

Do not take it after the expiry date printed on the packaging.

If you take it after the expiry date has passed, it may not work as well.

Do not take it if the packaging is torn or shows signs of tampering.

If you are not sure whether you should start taking this medicine, talk to your doctor or pharmacist.

Before you start to take it

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you have allergies to any other medicines, foods, preservatives or dyes.

Tell your doctor if you:

- have a heart, kidney or liver problem, or problems with your blood vessels
- have low magnesium or low potassium levels in the blood
- have epilepsy, fits or convulsions
- have diabetes
- have an overactive thyroid gland (hyperthyroidism) or are receiving thyroid medication
- have raised pressure in your eye (glaucoma)
- have had a serious head injury or have brain damage
- have difficulty passing urine

- suffer from mania (mood of excitement, over-activity and uninhibited behaviour) or bipolar disorder
- are a heavy drinker
- take sedatives or stimulants
- take any weight loss medicines
- are having electrical shock treatment
- have suicidal thoughts or have attempted suicide in the past.

If you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant, discuss with your doctor the risks and benefits of taking nortriptyline during pregnancy.

The general condition of your newborn baby might be affected by the medicine. If your baby has been exposed to this medicine during the last three months of pregnancy it may suffer withdrawal symptoms.

Do not breast-feed if you are taking this medicine.

The active ingredient in Nortriptyline NRIM passes into breast milk and there is a possibility that your baby may be affected.

Use with caution if you are over 65 years old.

Elderly persons are more sensitive to the effects of Nortriptyline NRIM.

If you have not told your doctor or pharmacist about any of the above, tell them before you start taking Nortriptyline NRIM.

Taking other medicines

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking any other medicines, including any that you get without a prescription from your pharmacy, supermarket or health food shop.

Tell any health professional who is prescribing a new medicine for you that you are taking Nortriptyline NRIM.

Some medicines and Nortriptyline NRIM may interfere with each other. These include:

- other antidepressant medicines including monoamine oxidase inhibitors (MAOIs) (e.g. phenelzine, tranylcypromine), selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) (e.g. citalopram, fluoxetine), tricyclic antidepressants (e.g. amitriptyline, imipramine)
- medicines used to treat heart conditions and/or high blood pressure (e.g. propafenone, flecainide, quinidine, guanethidine, debrisoquine, methyl dopa, clonidine, beta-blockers (e.g. sotalol), calcium antagonists (especially verapamil), and diuretics (fluid or water tablets)
- sympathomimetics, such as nasal decongestants (used for colds or hay fever) or weight reducing medicines
- anticholinergic medicines (e.g. ipratropium, propantheline, oxybutynin), used to relieve stomach cramps or spasms, to prevent travel sickness and to treat Parkinson's disease
- levodopa, used to treat Parkinson's disease
- cimetidine, used to treat reflux and ulcers
- medicines used to treat thyroid problems
- carbamazepine and barbiturates, medicines used to treat epilepsy
- phenothiazines (medicines used to treat mental illness or psychotic conditions and to relieve severe nausea and vomiting)

- antipsychotics such as pimozide and sertindole, used to treat certain mental and emotional conditions
- medicines used to treat fungal infections, such as fluconazole and terbinafine
- antihistamines, e.g. astemizole and terfenadine, used to prevent or relieve the symptoms of allergy (hay fever)
- anaesthetics (medicines used in surgery)
- tramadol, a medicine used to treat pain.

The above medicines may be affected by Nortriptyline NRIM, or may affect how well it works. You may need different amounts of Nortriptyline NRIM, or take it at different times, or you may need to take different medicines.

Your doctor and pharmacist have more information on medicines to be careful with or avoid while taking Nortriptyline NRIM.

How to take Nortriptyline NRIM

Read the label carefully and follow all directions given to you by your doctor and pharmacist.

They may differ from the information contained in this leaflet.

If you do not understand the instructions on the pack, ask your doctor or pharmacist for help.

How much to take

Your doctor will tell you how much Nortriptyline NRIM you need to take each day. It is important that you take Nortriptyline NRIM as directed by your doctor.

Do not take more than the recommended dose.

For the relief of symptoms of depression

It may take several weeks before any response to Nortriptyline NRIM is noticeable.

The usual dose for an adult is 25 mg of nortriptyline 3 or 4 times daily. If necessary, your doctor may increase the dose up to a maximum of 100 mg daily.

If you are elderly you may be started on a lower dose of 25 to 50 mg per day, in divided doses.

Your doctor may tell you to take different doses to these. If so, follow his/her instructions.

As an aid in smoking cessation

The recommended starting time is 10 - 28 days prior to the quit date.

The usual starting dose is 25 mg per day. This dose will usually be increased over a period of ten days to five weeks, to achieve a maintenance dose of 75 to 100 mg per day.

Your doctor may tell you to take different doses to these. If so, follow their instructions.

Nortriptyline NRIM and nicotine patches should only be used together under the supervision of your doctor.

Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you are unsure of the correct dose for you.

They will tell you exactly how much to take. This depends on your condition and whether or not you are taking any other medicines.

If you take the wrong dose, Nortriptyline NRIM may not work as well and your problem may not improve.

How to take it

Swallow Nortriptyline NRIM with a full glass of water.

Nortriptyline NRIM can be taken with or without food.

When to take it

Take it at about the same time each day.

Taking it at the same time each day will have the best effect. It will also help you to remember when to take it.

How long to take it

For depression, the length of treatment will depend on how quickly your symptoms improve. Most antidepressants including Nortriptyline NRIM take time to work, so don't feel discouraged if you do not feel better right away.

Continue taking the tablets every day.

Do not stop taking Nortriptyline NRIM even if you begin to feel better, unless your doctor tells you to do so.

Make sure you do not run out of tablets.

For smoking cessation, the usual length of treatment is 12 weeks. However, your doctor may tell you take Nortriptyline NRIM for up to 6 months.

Continue taking Nortriptyline NRIM until your doctor tells you to stop.

If you are unsure whether you should stop taking Nortriptyline NRIM, talk to your doctor or pharmacist.

If you forget to take it

If it is almost time for your next dose, skip the dose you missed and take the next dose when you are meant to.

Do not try to make up for missed doses by taking more than one dose at a time.

This may increase the chance of getting an unwanted side effect.

If there is still a long time to go before your next dose, take it as soon as you remember, and then go back to taking it as you would normally.

If you are not sure what to do, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

If you have trouble remembering to take your medicine, ask your pharmacist for hints.

While you are taking Nortriptyline NRIM

Things you must do

If you are about to be started on any new medicine, tell your doctor and pharmacist that you are taking Nortriptyline NRIM. Likewise, tell any other doctors, dentists and pharmacists who are treating you that you are taking this medicine.

If you are going to have surgery, tell the surgeon or anaesthetist that you are taking this medicine.

If you become pregnant while taking this medicine, tell your doctor immediately.

Keep all of your doctor's appointments so that your progress can be checked.

See your doctor if you notice any of the following, especially if they are severe, happen suddenly, or if you had not had these symptoms before: anxiety or agitation, panic attacks, difficulty sleeping, impulsivity, irritability, aggressiveness, restlessness, over-activity or uninhibited behaviour or worsening of depression.

Tell your doctor immediately if you have any distressing thoughts (thoughts of suicide or self-harm) or experiences during this initial period or at any other time.

Things you must not do

Do not give your medicine to anyone else, even if they have the same condition as you.

This medicine is only intended for the use of the patient it has been prescribed for.

Do not take Nortriptyline NRIM to treat any other complaints unless your doctor tells you to.

Do not stop taking Nortriptyline NRIM or change the dosage without checking with your doctor.

Suddenly stopping Nortriptyline NRIM may cause unwanted side effects

Things to be careful of

Be careful when driving, operating machinery or performing jobs that need you to be alert, until you are certain that Nortriptyline NRIM does not affect your performance.

Nortriptyline NRIM may cause drowsiness in some people.

Be careful when drinking alcohol while taking Nortriptyline NRIM.

Combining Nortriptyline NRIM and alcohol can make you more sleepy, dizzy or light-headed. Your doctor may suggest avoiding alcohol while you are taking Nortriptyline NRIM.

An increased risk of bone fracture has been observed in patients taking this type of medicine.

In case of overdose

If you take too much

You should only take the number of tablets that you have been told.

Immediately telephone your doctor, or the Poisons Information Centre (telephone 0800 POISON or 0800 764 766), or go to Accident and Emergency at your nearest hospital, if you think that you or anyone else may have taken too much Nortriptyline NRIM.

Do this even if there are no signs of discomfort or poisoning.

You may need urgent medical attention.

Take the pack of Nortriptyline with you if you can.

Side effects

Tell your doctor or pharmacist as soon as possible if you do not feel well while you are taking Nortriptyline NRIM.

Like all medicines, Nortriptyline NRIM may occasionally cause side effects in some people. Sometimes they are serious, most of the time they are not. You may need medical attention if you get some of the side effects.

Ask your doctor or pharmacist to answer any questions you may have.

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you notice any of the following and they worry you:

- stomach or bowel problems (e.g. nausea, diarrhoea, constipation)
- dry mouth or taste change
- change in appetite
- shakiness or tremor
- trouble sleeping
- dizziness or light-headedness (especially on standing rapidly)
- tingling or numbness of the hands or feet
- ringing or other persistent noise in the ears
- difficulty in passing urine.

These side effects are usually mild.

Tell your doctor immediately if you notice any of the following:

- changes in the speed of your heart rate (increase or decrease) or irregular heart beat
- agitation, anxiety or worsening of depression
- confusion or hallucinations (seeing or hearing things that are not there)
- vision problems
- yellowing of the eyes or skin (jaundice).

These may be serious side effects. You may need urgent medical attention.

Tell your doctor immediately, or go to the Accident and Emergency at your nearest hospital if you notice any of the following:

- serious allergic reaction (symptoms include: swelling of the face, lips, mouth or throat which may cause difficulty in swallowing or breathing)
- severe chest pain or tightness
- thoughts of suicide
- fainting, seizures or fits.

These are very serious side effects; you may need urgent medical attention or hospitalisation.

See your doctor if you experience any of the following when you stop Nortriptyline NRIM treatment:

- nausea
- headache
- malaise (a general feeling of being unwell).

These symptoms are generally not serious and disappear within a few days.

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you notice anything else that is making you feel unwell.

Other side effects not listed above may also occur in some patients.

Do not be alarmed by this list of possible side effects.

You may not experience any of them.

After taking Nortriptyline NRIM

Storage

Keep your tablets in the pack until it is time to take them.

If you take the tablets out of the pack they may not keep well.

Keep Nortriptyline NRIM in a cool dry place where the temperature stays below 25°C.

Do not store it or any other medicine in the bathroom, near a sink, or on a window sill.

Do not leave it in the car.

Heat and damp can destroy some medicines.

Keep it and any other medicine where children cannot reach it.

A locked cupboard at least one-and-a-half metres above the ground is a good place to store medicines.

Do not keep Nortriptyline NRIM past its expiry date (as shown on the blister and carton).

Disposal

Return any unused Nortriptyline NRIM, and any other medicine past its expiry date to your pharmacy.

Product description

What it looks like

Nortriptyline NRIM is available in blister packs of 100 tablets. The tablets are white to off-white round biconvex tablets, marked with 'NM' on one side and '10' (10 mg tablets) or '25' (25 mg tablets) on the other side.

Ingredients

Active ingredient:

- nortriptyline hydrochloride

Inactive ingredients:

- starch – maize
- magnesium stearate
- lactose monohydrate.

Nortriptyline NRIM contains lactose.

Nortriptyline NRIM does not contain sucrose, tartrazine or any other azo dyes.

Sponsor details

Distributed in New Zealand by:

BNM Group
39 Anzac Road
Browns Bay
Auckland 0753

Ph: 0800 565 633

Date of preparation

This leaflet was prepared on 09 May 2013.

