

INFORMATION TO PATIENTS

Commonly prescribed medications for the treatment of headache disorders

SUMATRIPTAN and other triptans

Patient Information sheet for Triptans

Triptans are a family of drugs that act on the specific pathway in the migraine mechanism. The family includes Imigran (Sumatriptan), Zomig (Zolmitriptan), Almogran (Almotriptan), Naramig (Naratriptan), Maxalt (Rizatriptan) and Migard (Frovatriptan). They all differ in their rate of onset, duration of action and side effects. If one Triptan doesn't work or gives unacceptable side effects, there is a good chance another will be successful.

Sumatriptan is the most widely tried, tested and used triptan in children and adolescents. It is available in tablet format and also as a nasal spray (NS). The nasal spray Sumatriptan is licensed for children over the age 12 years, but its safety and efficacy allow its wider use in younger children on a specialist recommendation.

Other triptans are available in wafer or melt forms, for convenience only as they melt in the mouth, and do not get absorbed quicker than tablets.

When should they be taken?

Sumatriptan NS (10 mg) should be taken as early as possible in the attack when you are sure it is migraine. In many people, Triptans do not work if taken during an aura.

If sumatriptan NS is not available or can't be taken sumatriptan tablets 25, 50 or 100 mg can be an alternative, though less effective in children than the nasal spray

How soon can I take another dose?

A second dose can be taken after 2 hours if there is some response to the first dose. Patients who fail to respond to the initial dose should not take a second dose for the same attack.

In patients with poor or no response to sumatriptan, taking Ibuprofen at the same time may increase efficacy and achieve better response.

What are the main side effects?

Nasal spray may cause a unpleasant taste in the mouth or tingling sensation. These feelings disappear quickly and usually harmless. Some children may complain of nausea.

How many times a week can I take them?

If Triptans are taken too frequently there is a danger that they can cause overuse headache. If you are taking more than 2-3 Triptans a week then you should discuss further options with your doctor.

Are there any conditions where they shouldn't be taken?

Triptans should not be taken if you have a history of diseases of the arteries. This includes heart disease, stroke or uncontrolled blood pressure.