

# ConsumerRx™

## Medications to prevent migraine headaches

### How can medication be used to treat migraine headaches?

Medication may be used as either **quick relief** or to **prevent** migraine headaches.

Preventive medications may be taken every day to:

- Reduce headache frequency (how often you get them), severity, and duration.
- Make treatments of headaches more effective.
- Improve function or lessen disability.

### When should prevention medication be used for migraines?

You may want to talk to your doctor about preventive medication if:

- Migraines interfere with daily activities.
- Headaches are frequent (four or more headaches a month).
- Quick relief medications do not work or are too expensive.

### Which medications are most effective at preventing migraines?

At this time - the scientific evidence is very strong for the generic medications below:

#### Generic Medications: ~ \$6 – \$44\*

<b>amitriptyline</b> (Elavil®) \$6
<b>propranolol</b> (Inderal®) \$8
<b>timolol</b> (Blocadren®) \$20
<b>valproic acid</b> (Depakene®) \$44

\*Approximate cost estimates based on a 30-day supply. Actual prices may vary depending on your pharmacy and the amount or strength of medication dispensed. Brand names in ( ) are non-formulary and are listed for your reference only.

### Are there differences in side effects between medications to prevent migraines?

Side effects differ between medications. The US Headache Consortium has reported that patients using the medications **propranolol**, **timolol** and **valproic acid** rarely have side effects.

### I am on a medication to prevent my headaches, but I am not seeing any change. How long does it take to notice a difference in my migraines?

It may take several weeks before changes are noticed, don't get discouraged. One way to measure success is by keeping a diary of your headaches. Also, medications may be less effective at reducing migraines if a person uses too much alcohol, caffeine, or quick relief medications to treat migraines.

### THE BOTTOM LINE

Preventive medications can help you gain control of your migraine headaches and reduce how often and severe they are. **The scientific evidence is very strong for these generics, amitriptyline, propranolol, timolol and valproic acid** to prevent migraines.

*Note: Since many medication options are available, our physicians and pharmacists developed this to provide you with information about the available alternatives, as well as potential advantages and lack of advantages of the various products. This medication summary was developed based upon an evaluation of information from the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), scientific studies, and input from practicing doctors and specialists.*

