Dr. Tony Kodsi
PAIN SPECIALIST

INNER WEST
PAIN CENTRE
www.innerwestpaincentre.com.au

NORTRIPTYLINE

DRUG NAME

Generic: Nortriptyline
Class of drug: Tricyclic antidepressant
Brands in Australia: Allegron

DOSAGE FORM

Available as a 10 mg or 25 mg tablet. Quantity 50.

HOW IT WORKS

Tricyclic antidepressants balance brain chemicals (serotonin and noradrenaline) that are involved in both mood and how pain signals are processed. They help “turn down the volume” of pain signals in the spinal cord and brain. They are often used in low doses for nerve pain, headaches, and widespread pain conditions, not necessarily for depression.

The onset of action is usually less than 1 week for pain.

Usual effective dose is 25-75 mg at bedtime.

DOSAGE & FREQUENCY

Your doctor will advise on the starting dose. Often titrated slowly to minimise side effects.

- start with _____
- if tolerated, increase to _____ after _____ days
- if necessary, increase by _____ every _____ week(s)
- if successive increases are well tolerated *and bring additional benefit*, continue to titrate up to a maximum of _____
- to be reviewed by your doctor on _____

It may be worth checking blood pressure before and after starting treatment, as well as with each dose change. Those who have blood pressure drops with standing can get worse on this medication.

ECG should be done by your GP if you have heart disease or known heart conduction problems, especially with doses >50 mg.

ROUTE OF ADMINISTRATION

Oral (by mouth) unless otherwise specified.

WHAT ELSE SHOULD I KNOW WHILE TAKING THIS MEDICATION

- You may get side effects such as blurred vision, drowsiness and dry mouth. They may be troublesome but may lessen or disappear after about 7 days. Try taking this medicine at night to reduce daytime drowsiness. Discuss any problems with your doctor or pharmacist.

Dr Antony Kodsi
MBBS MMed FRACP FAChPM FFPMANZCA
Pain Specialist

- You may feel dizzy on standing when taking this medicine. Get up gradually from sitting or lying to minimise this effect; sit or lie down if you become dizzy.
- Avoid driving and operating machinery until you know how you react to the medication and your doctor says that you can.
- Tricyclic antidepressants may increase the effects of alcohol.
- Do not stop taking this medicine suddenly unless your doctor tells you to.

STORAGE INSTRUCTIONS

Store at room temperature, below 25°C, away from moisture and sunlight. Keep out of reach of children.

DISPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS

Return unused or expired medication to your pharmacy for safe disposal.

MISSED DOSE INSTRUCTIONS

Ask your doctor or pharmacist.

EMERGENCY INSTRUCTIONS

Seek immediate medical help if you suspect overdose or experience severe side effects such as chest pain, severe eye pain/loss of vision, seizures, or difficulty breathing.

If you have taken too much, go to hospital.

If you are suicidal, go to your doctor immediately.

COMMON SIDE EFFECTS

Less dry mouth than amitriptyline.

- Drowsiness, dizziness
- Dry mouth, constipation
- Blurred vision
- Weight gain

SERIOUS SIDE EFFECTS

- Irregular heartbeat, chest pain
- Inability to urinate in men
- Severe eye pain and visual loss
- Severe confusion, hallucinations
- Suicidal thoughts or worsening mood
- Signs of serotonin syndrome: agitation, sweating, tremor, fever, diarrhoea, muscle stiffness

Go to your nearest Emergency Department as soon as you develop any of these.

MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR SIDE EFFECTS

- If drowsy: take at night, or reduce the dose. It may improve after a week.
- For dry mouth: sugar-free gum or frequent sips of water
- For constipation: increase fibre and fluids; use mild laxatives if needed
- For weight gain: monitor diet and exercise

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Dr Antony Kodsi
MBBS MMed FRACP FAChPM FFPMANZCA
Pain Specialist

Interactions:

- Alcohol can increase drowsiness — best avoided.
  Caution with other antidepressants, tramadol, or St John's Wort (risk of serotonin syndrome).

Precautions:

- Those with enlarged prostates, may make bladder emptying worse
- Those with certain types of glaucoma can get a rare crisis
- Heart and blood pressure conditions can be exacerbated
- Those with bipolar affective disorder can become manic
- Those with liver disease need lower doses
- Elderly people are slower to respond and are more prone to falls
- Use in pregnancy may be warranted, but withdrawal/reduction prior to delivery may prevent the baby from getting withdrawal
- It has been used in breastfeeding
- If you are having elective surgery, discontinuation for several days may be required. This depends on the dose and your need for it. You must talk with your doctor about it.

TITRATION DIARY

Date	Dose Taken	Side Effects	Notes (e.g., sleep, pain relief)

Dr Antony Kodsi
MBBS MMed FRACP FAChPM FFPMANZCA
Pain Specialist