

Candesartan for Headache

Candesartan is a medication used to prevent migraine attacks from happening so often. You need to take it every day. This medication is licensed for other conditions, but not specifically for migraine. Sometimes a medicine is used “off-label”. This means it is not officially licensed for this condition, but there is good evidence that it is safe and effective. Candesartan is widely used by headache specialists and supported by clinical evidence.

Before Starting Candesartan:

Your prescriber will consider several factors before prescribing candesartan to make sure it’s safe and suitable for you.

Please tell your prescriber if you:

- Have kidney, liver, heart, or gallbladder problems
- Are struggling with symptoms of low blood pressure, including feeling lightheaded
- Take other blood pressure medications

How Do I Take Candesartan?

You will usually start on a low dose of candesartan, which will be gradually increased. This helps your body adjust and reduces the chance of side effects.

The schedule below is a guide. Your prescriber may adjust it to suit your individual needs and will advise you on your starting dose. Some people may begin with a lower dose of 2mg once daily, while others may be started on higher doses of up to 16mg.

The dose can be increased every one week, or more slowly every two weeks. Your prescriber will tell you how often you should increase your dose.

	Evening
For 1-2 weeks take:	4mg
For 1-2 weeks take:	8mg
For 1-2 weeks take:	12mg
Thereafter take:	16mg

You may be advised to take your medication twice daily by your prescriber as per this schedule:

	Morning	Evening
For 1-2 weeks take:		4mg
For 1-2 weeks take:	4mg	4mg
For 1-2 weeks take:	4mg	8mg
Thereafter take:	8mg	8mg

This leaflet reflects a consensus of current clinical practice as agreed by the British Association for the Study of Headache (BASH) Council. It is intended to provide information to support clinical decision-making and does not constitute prescriptive guidance that must be followed in all cases. Clinicians should continue to exercise their own professional judgement and tailor management to the individual. The content reflects the collective experience of headache specialists across the UK, whose contributions are gratefully acknowledged, and recognises the ongoing evolution of best practice. This leaflet should be read in conjunction with the Summary of Product Characteristics and the patient information leaflet provided with all medication.

How Long Should I Try It?

- If you are tolerating candesartan well, it is advisable to reach a dose of 16mg a day.
- If your migraine attacks are improving but are not fully controlled on 16mg, your prescriber may continue to increase the dose every 1-2 weeks, up to a **maximum of 32mg a day**.
- Keep taking candesartan for at least 3 months before deciding if it is helping
- If you experience side-effects that are difficult to manage, contact your prescriber to discuss your dose
- Your prescriber or GP will review your treatment regularly
- Do not stop taking it suddenly, as you may experience a temporary rise in blood pressure and your migraines may worsen. Speak to your prescriber about how to reduce the dose safely
- If it is working well, your prescriber may advise gradually reducing the dose, typically after about 12 months

Do I Need Blood Tests?

Some people may need blood tests to check kidney function or blood count when doses are changed. Your prescriber will advise. Not everyone needs regular blood tests.

What Are the Possible Side-Effects?

Some people get side-effects. These usually get better as your body gets used to the medication within a few weeks.

This is not a full list of side-effects. Please read the information leaflet that comes with your medication for more details.

The most common side-effects are:

- Feeling dizzy or light-headed. This is most noticeable after starting and after dose changes. For most people this will settle after a few days
- Cough

If you feel very tired, have a fever, or think you have an infection, tell your prescriber.

If you feel tired or dizzy, do not drive, ride a bike, or use tools or machinery

Pregnancy and Breastfeeding

Candesartan is not safe in pregnancy or breastfeeding.

- Do not take it if you are pregnant or trying for a baby
- Speak to your GP for advice about safe contraception and pregnancy planning
- Always tell your prescriber if you think you might be pregnant

For more information, see: Best Use of Medicine in Pregnancy (BUMPS)

<https://www.medicinesinpregnancy.org/>

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