

Lamotrigine for headache and facial pain

Lamotrigine is used to prevent facial pain (such as SUNCT or SUNA) and headache from occurring. It is not licensed for the treatment of headache disorders. This medication is licensed for other conditions, but not specifically for headache or facial pain. 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. Lamotrigine is widely used by headache specialists and supported by clinical evidence.

Before starting lamotrigine:

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

Please tell your prescriber if you have:

- Heart problems
- Liver and kidney problems
- History of mental health problems
- Blood disorders

Also tell your prescriber all the medications and supplements you take, including anything you have bought over-the-counter or online.

How to take lamotrigine:

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

The schedule below is a guide, but your prescriber may change it to suit your individual needs. People which also take a medication containing sodium valproate will need a slower regime.

	Morning	Afternoon (5pm)
For 14 days take:		25mg
For 14 days take:	25mg	25mg
For 14 days take:	50mg	50mg
For 14 days take:	75mg	75mg
For 14 days take:	100mg	100mg
For 14 days take:	125mg	125mg
For 14 days take:	150mg	150mg
For 14 days take:	175mg	175mg
Thereafter take:	200mg	200mg

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 to take lamotrigine:

If you are tolerating lamotrigine well, it is advisable to reach at least a dose of 200mg a day. Ideally, you should take lamotrigine at this dose (or higher, if prescribed) for at least 3 months before deciding if it's helping.

If you experience side effects that are difficult to manage, contact your prescriber to discuss your dose.

Do not stop taking lamotrigine suddenly, as your pain may return or worsen and you may feel unwell. Speak to your prescriber about how to reduce the dose safely.

Your prescriber or GP will review your treatment regularly. If it is working well, your prescriber may advise gradually reducing the dose, typically after about 12 months.

Possible side effects of lamotrigine:

Some people get side effects. These usually get better as your body gets used to the medication.

Please read the information leaflet that comes with your medication for more details. This is not a full list of side effects, but the most common ones are:

- feeling sick (nausea) or vomiting
- dizziness or poor balance
- feeling tired
- blurred or double vision
- diarrhoea
- difficulty sleeping
- sore throat or blocked nose

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

Lamotrigine can very rarely cause serious skin reactions that require urgent hospital treatment. You should contact urgent care (NHS 111) or your GP if any of the following symptoms occur:

- A widespread red or purple rash
- Blisters or skin peeling
- Sores in your mouth, eyes, or genital area
- Flu-like symptoms such as fever, headache, or cough

Pregnancy and breastfeeding:

Lamotrigine can sometimes be used in pregnancy or while breastfeeding, but only in the lowest dose that helps. Your prescriber will talk to you about the benefits and the risks.

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Always tell your prescriber if you are trying for a baby or think you might be pregnant.

For more information, see: Best Use of Medicine in Pregnancy (BUMPS)
<https://www.medicinesinpregnancy.org/>

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