

# Using Atenolol for Migraine Prevention

## Background

Atenolol is a member of a group of drugs known as beta-blockers. These are widely used in a number of areas but particularly in cardiovascular medicine. They are also very effective in the prevention of migraine.

## Side effects

No tablets are without side effects in a small number of people. The main problems associated with beta-blockers are fatigue and coldness of the hands and feet. They should not be used if you have asthma or bronchitis as they can make this condition worse.

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## Taking the tablets

The normal doses range between 25 mg and 100 mg twice a day. As migraine sufferers are often more sensitive to medication compared with non-sufferers, start at the 25 mg dose. You should then increase in increments of 25 mg every two weeks up to 50 mg twice a day, or the dose that you are free of side effects if these are problematic. The dose can be increased up to 100mg twice a day if you do not have side effects with 50mg twice daily.

## For how long should I take them?

You need to take the medication at the maximum dose you can tolerate for around 8 weeks before benefit can be judged. If there is a benefit then they should be taken for at least six months after which time you may like to discuss with your doctor whether you can withdraw them.

Bath Headache Clinic 2017

### Neurology Department

Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust  
Combe Park, Bath BA1 3NG  
01225 428331 [www.ruh.nhs.uk](http://www.ruh.nhs.uk)

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