

Using Indomethacin for the Treatment of Headaches

What is indomethacin?

Indomethacin is one of a group of medicines called non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs); these drugs are painkillers which reduce swelling. Although NSAIDs are widely used by headache specialists and neurologists, it should be noted that indomethacin is not licensed for use in headache.

What is the dose of indomethacin to treat headache?

You need to take indomethacin for at least three weeks before a benefit can be judged.

<i>Week of treatment</i>	<i>Dose</i>
Week 1	25mg three times a day with food
Week 2	50mg three times a day with food
Week 3	50mg three times a day with food

If there is no benefit after three weeks, stop taking the medication. If there is a benefit, then you should reduce the dose until you have found the lowest effective dose. The medication should be taken for at least two months after which time you should discuss with your doctor whether you can withdraw them.

Does indomethacin have any side effects?

Like many medicines, indomethacin may cause side-effects, particularly when you first start taking it. The most common side effects are headache, dizziness and indigestion. If you are at risk of indigestion or stomach ulcers whilst taking indomethacin, your doctor may prescribe a second medicine (e.g. omeprazole) to protect your stomach and reduce the risk of these side effects.



Other effects include:

- Effects on the blood. If you develop bruising, sore throats, nose bleeds or infections, tell your doctor who may wish to test your blood,
- Allergic reactions: skin rash, itching, redness, swelling of the throat, difficulty breathing,
- Jaundice (yellow skin or eyes),
- Effects on the kidney.

Who cannot take indomethacin?

You should not take indomethacin if you:

- have ever had an allergic reaction to indomethacin, aspirin or other NSAIDs or COX II inhibitors (e.g. celecoxib) or any of the ingredients in the capsule. An allergic reaction may include a rash, itching, difficulty breathing or swelling of the face, lips, throat, tongue or runny nose,
- have now or have previously had stomach ulcers or bleeding in the digestive system,
- have severe liver, kidney or heart disease,
- have heart problems or are at high risk of heart attack or stroke,
- take lithium.

Pregnancy and breast-feeding

Indomethacin may make it more difficult to become pregnant. You should inform your doctor if you are planning to become pregnant. If you **are** pregnant, or are breast feeding speak to your doctor or pharmacist before taking this medicine.

This leaflet is intended to provide a brief overview of aspects of this treatment protocol. It is not intended as a substitute for the comprehensive 'product information' leaflet found inside all boxes of medication. The 'product information' leaflet should always be read before taking medication.

Your prescribing doctor will discuss the risks and benefits of the medication as it relates to you and answer any further questions you may have.

Bath Headache Clinic 2017

Neurology Department

Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS
Foundation Trust
Combe Park, Bath BA1 3NG
01225 428331 www.ruh.nhs.uk

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Telephone 01225 825656 or Email
ruh-tr.PatientAdviceandLiaisonService@nhs.net