

Indomethacin for the treatment of headache

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

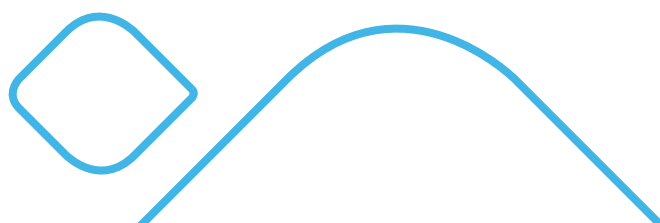
If there is no benefit after three weeks, stop taking indomethacin. If there is a benefit, then you should reduce the dose until you have found the lowest effective dose. The medication should be taken for at least two months after which time you should discuss with your doctor whether you can have a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

Does indomethacin have any side effects?

All tablets have a number of side effects listed in the medication packets. The most common side effects are headache, dizziness and indigestion. If you are at risk of indigestion or stomach ulcers your doctor may prescribe a medicine (e.g. omeprazole) to protect your stomach.

Other effects include:

- Effects on the blood. If you develop bruising, sore throats, nose bleeds or infections, tell your doctor
- Allergic reactions: skin rash, itching, redness, swelling of the throat, difficulty breathing
- 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.
- 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***

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If you would like this leaflet in email form, large print, braille or another language, please contact the Patient Support and Complaints team on 01225 825656 or ruh-tr.psct@nhs.net.

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