

Information about changes to medicines or treatments on the NHS: **Changes to trimipramine prescribing**

The NHS will be asking doctors to stop or greatly reduce the prescribing of some medicines from December 2017. This is because the medicines are:

- Not as safe as other medicines OR
- Not as good (effective) as other medicines OR
- More expensive than other medicines that do the same thing.

One of these medicines is trimipramine.

This document will explain why the changes are happening and where you can get more information and support.

Why does the NHS want to reduce prescribing of trimipramine?

Trimipramine belongs to a group of medicines used to treat depression called “tricyclics”.

In its guidance on depression, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) recommends that a different type of antidepressants called “SSRIs” should be the first choice of treatment, rather than tricyclics. SSRIs don’t have as many side effects as tricyclics and they are safer if you take too many.

If SSRIs don’t work and a tricyclic antidepressant is needed, then there are alternatives that are far less expensive than trimipramine. The price of trimipramine has increased a lot so it is not good value for money.

Trimipramine is used as a painkiller for a very small number of patients. However, it is not licensed* for this use and there are other alternative, licensed painkillers available.

*Having a licence means that a medicine has passed tests to ensure that it is effective, safe and manufactured to appropriate quality standards.

What options are available instead of trimipramine?

You can talk to your doctor about the options available so that you can come to a joint decision about what's best for you.

There are now many alternative antidepressants to trimipramine. It's also possible that you will no longer need to take an antidepressant at all.

If you are taking trimipramine for pain relief, there are also several alternatives available.

You may suffer side effects if you stop taking trimipramine suddenly. Your doctor will support you to gradually reduce your dose of trimipramine before you stop and slowly introduce a new medicine (if you are to be prescribed one).

Where can I find more information and support?

- You can speak to your local pharmacist, GP or the person who prescribed the medication to you
- MIND provide a leaflet called 'Making sense of antidepressants': www.mind.org.uk/media/4900726/antidepressants-2016-pdf.pdf
- The NICE information for patients can be found at: www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg90/ifp/chapter/About-this-information
- The Patients Association can also offer support and advice: www.patients-association.org.uk/ or call 020 8423 8999
- Healthwatch: www.healthwatch.co.uk

Find out more about the medicines that are being stopped or reduced:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/medicines/items-which-should-not-be-routinely-prescribed/>

Find out more about licensed and unlicensed medicines:

<https://www.gov.uk/drug-safety-update/off-label-or-unlicensed-use-of-medicines-prescribers-responsibilities#a-licensed-medicine-meets-acceptable-standards-of-efficacy-safety-and-quality>

If you have any questions about trimipramine prescribing please email them to: england.medicines@nhs.net