

OXCARBAZEPINE

Drug Treatments for Facial Neuralgias

Description

Trade name **Trileptal**.

Oxcarbazepine is an anticonvulsant. It is a derivative of **carbamazepine (Tegretol)**, and also very similar to **gabapentin** (Neurontin).

Oxcarbazepine was developed by modifying the chemical formula of carbamazepine to make it more tolerable. As an anti-epileptic, it is at least as effective as carbamazepine, has fewer drug interaction problems, generates fewer toxic by-products, and causes less skin allergy. Trileptal appears to work faster than Tegretol and seems to cause less drowsiness. The mechanism of how oxcarbazepine works is not known at present. One action is that it decreases serum sodium.

According to the Trigeminal Neuralgia Newsletter (Summer 2003), patients are generally started at 600 mg. per day, and the maximum dose is 2,400 mg per day.

Medical References

A Canadian neurologist, Dr. Guy Remillard, reports that early studies show Trileptal is 85% effective in controlling pain that didn't respond to Tegretol, thus making oxcarbazepine an option for patients who could not tolerate or were not helped by Tegretol.

[According to Dr. Andy Kaufman of Winnipeg](#), "If you have had an allergic reaction to Tegretol® (carbamazepine), then you should not try Trileptal. As with other anti-seizure medications, increasing and decreasing the dose should be gradual."

Side-effects

Reported side-effects include decreased blood sodium, dizziness, fatigue, headache, tremors, drowsiness, diminished concentration, double vision and stammering.

Patient Experiences

- *"I used Trileptal pretty successfully for most of the year before my last GK (Gamma Knife) surgery. But with all the postage, it usually cost me over \$300 / month and of course I had to pay for liver function tests etc. out of pocket. There is no law in the US that tests for the Trileptal level. It worked like its cousin, Tegretol, but I sure didn't feel as fuzzy and it worked when the Tegretol was no longer effective at 1600 a day. It pretty much gave our eventually also." - anonymous*
- *"Trileptal is a "wonder-drug" as far as I'm concerned. The Tegretol was making me so groggy and dopey. I now can think and do without the facial pain and side effects of the Tegretol. Just hope it holds out for a while. The only side effect that I notice is some hand tremors and anxiety. The anxiety could be due to other things going on, but it does seem somewhat increased. I do hope that I will adjust to the tremors. Also have had some insomnia associated with it. I was placed on 150 mg of Trileptal bid (twice a day) and told to increase it by 150 per week for control. At this stage I am not going to increase it and believe I will take the 2nd dose earlier in the pm to try and eliminate the insomnia." - Delores ashele1@HOTMAIL.COM*