

**Patient
Information**

Low Dose Naltrexone

Introduction

This leaflet will give you information about Low Dose Naltrexone (LDN), its use and possible side effects.

You have been prescribed LDN to ease some of the symptoms related to hair conditions like Lichen Planopilaris such as pain, discomfort and itching.

What is LND and how does it work?

This medication is currently prescribed off label. This means that it is being used for a condition it was not previously meant to treat.

This treatment has only been prescribed by the consultant after careful consideration of other treatment options.

LDN is used to treat people who are addicted to opioids (very strong pain relief). The typical dose for patients with opioid dependency would be 50 to 100 mg each day.

LDN however, taken in low doses (3 to 4.5 mg) has been found to be beneficial to the immune system. It works by blocking various cells within the immune system and as a result increases the body's endorphin and enkephalin (hormones) levels. These hormones are important in the management of pain and irritation.

What dose of LND will I be given?

A normal starting dose is 3 to 4.5 mg daily. However, lower doses are often used for patients with thyroid disorders.

How long does LDN need to be used for?

The effects of LDN only happen while it is being taken.

If LDN is stopped, the symptoms associated with your condition are likely to return.

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Department

Dermatology

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- Difficultly sleeping (usually just for the first week however, if this continues, the dose can be changed to 1.5 mg or 3 mg with the consultant's guidance)
- More vivid dreams (this often reduces over time)
- Reduced need for thyroid medication. Patients with autoimmune thyroid disease may start with a 1.5 mg dose and have their thyroid function monitored every 2 to 4 weeks. This is to prevent a change from an underactive thyroid becoming an overactive thyroid. Many patients while taking LDN require less thyroid medication
- Headaches (rare)
- Anxiety (rare)
- Tachycardia (quick heart rate) (rare)

Other side effects may be possible but many patients take LDN without any side effects.

If you develop any side effects while taking LDN please contact Dr Takwale's secretary. The contact details are at the end of this leaflet.

What tests are needed before starting LDN?

Liver functions, inflammation markers as well as thyroid function are checked before you start the treatment. These tests are then repeated every 2 to 3 months to make sure that the medicine is not affecting your liver or thyroid function.

Important points to remember

LDN will not be prescribe to:

- women who are pregnant
- patients who have had organ transplants and take immunosuppressive medications
- patients with known liver disease

Contact information**Dr Takwale's Secretary**

Tel: 0300 422 5396

Monday to Friday, 9:00am to 3:00pm

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