

Table 14.2 Medications Used to Prevent Migraine Headache

Medication	Indications	Dosing	Side effects affecting rehab	Other side effects or considerations
Beta blockers				
Propranolol (Inderal)	Migraine headache	40-240 mg/day in divided doses or once/day if using Inderal LA	Cog: +++ S: +++ A: 0 Motor: ++ D: + Com: + F: +++	Bradycardia, decreased blood pressure, sexual dysfunction. Do not abruptly discontinue. Avoid combining with sympathomimetics; can cause hypertension and increased heart rate.
Nadolol (Corgard)	Migraine headache	20-120 mg 1-2 times/day	Cog: ++ S: ++ A: 0 Motor: + D: + Com: + F: ++	Bradycardia, decreased blood pressure, sexual dysfunction. Do not abruptly discontinue. Avoid combining with sympathomimetics; can cause hypertension and increased heart rate.
Timolol (Blocadren)	Migraine headache	20-60 mg 1-2 times/day	Cog: ++ S: ++ A: 0 Motor: + D: + Com: + F: ++	Bradycardia, decreased blood pressure, sexual dysfunction. Do not abruptly discontinue. Avoid combining with sympathomimetics; can cause hypertension and increased heart rate.
Atenolol (Tenormin)	Migraine headache	25-100 mg once/day	Cog: ++ S: ++ A: 0 Motor: + D: + Com: + F: ++	Bradycardia, decreased blood pressure, sexual dysfunction. Do not abruptly discontinue. Avoid combining with sympathomimetics; can cause hypertension and increased heart rate.
Metoprolol (Toprol)	Migraine headache	50-200 mg twice/day	Cog: ++ S: ++ A: 0 Motor: + D: + Com: + F: ++	Bradycardia, decreased blood pressure, sexual dysfunction. Do not abruptly discontinue. Avoid combining with sympathomimetics; can cause hypertension and increased heart rate.
Tricyclic antidepressants				
Amitriptyline (Elavil)	Migraine headache	10-150 mg at bedtime	Cog: ++++ S: ++++ A: 0 Motor: ++ D: ++++ Com: ++++ F: ++++	Weight gain: +++ Seizure: +++ Cardiac: +++ Sexual: ++ Not recommended in elderly due to high sedative and anticholinergic effects that increase risk of falls.
Nortriptyline (Pamelor)	Migraine headache	10-150 mg at bedtime	Cog: +++ S: ++ A: 0 Motor: ++ D: ++ Com: ++ F: +	Weight gain: + Seizure: ++ Cardiac: ++ Sexual: ++ Preferred tricyclic antidepressant in elderly due to low anticholinergic and sedative effects.

From L. Carl, J. Gallo, and P. Johnson, 2014, *Practical Pharmacology in Rehabilitation: Effect of Medication on Therapy* (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics).

Medication	Indications	Dosing	Side effects affecting rehab	Other side effects or considerations
Doxepin (Sinequan)	Migraine headache	10-200 mg at bedtime	Cog: ++++ S: ++++ A: 0 Motor: ++ D: +++ Com: ++++ F: ++	Weight gain: ++ Seizure: +++ Cardiac: ++ Sexual: ++
Desipramine (Norpramin)	Migraine headache	25-150 mg at bedtime	Cog: ++ S: ++ A: + Motor: ++ D: ++ Com: ++ F: ++	Weight gain: + Seizure: ++ Cardiac: ++ Sexual: ++ Prolongs QT interval and increases risk of arrhythmia.
Monoamine oxidase inhibitor antidepressant				
Phenelzine (Nardil)	Migraine headache	15-60 mg 3 times/day	Cog: ++ S: ++ A: 0/+ Motor: 0 D: + Com: ++ F: +	Weight gain: + Seizure: + Cardiac: + Sexual: +++ Tyramine-rich foods and beverages should be avoided starting on day 1 and for 2 wk after discontinuance.
Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor antidepressants				
Fluoxetine (Prozac)	Migraine headache	10-80 mg/day	Cog: 0/+ S: 0/+ A: + Motor: 0 D: 0/+ Com: 0/+ F: 0	Weight gain: 0/+ Seizure: ++ Cardiac: 0/+ Sexual: +++ 20% incidence of nausea; take with food. 20% incidence of insomnia; take in morning.
Anticonvulsant				
Topiramate (Topamax)	Migraine headache	100-400 mg 2-3 times/day	Cog: ++ S: ++ A: ++ Motor: +++ D: + Com: +++ F: ++	Dizziness, somnolence, dry mouth, edema, blurred vision, weight gain, difficulty with concentration and attention, language impairment, behavioral changes, weight loss, altered taste, metabolic acidosis, kidney stones, hypohidrosis.
Valproic acid (Depakene)	Migraine headache	250 mg at bedtime; titrate to 1500 mg/day in divided doses	Cog: ++ S: ++ A: ++ Motor: ++ D: ++ Com: ++ F: ++	Weight gain, hepatotoxicity, dyspepsia, pancreatitis that can be life threatening, alopecia, tremor, thrombocytopenia, platelet dysfunction, rash, hair loss, anticonvulsant hypersensitivity syndrome.
Calcium channel blocker				
Verapamil (Calan)	Migraine headache	240-360 mg/day in divided doses	Cog: ++ S: ++ A: 0 Motor: + D: + Com: +	Decreased heart rate, decreased blood pressure, sexual dysfunction.

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Medication	Indications	Dosing	Side effects affecting rehab	Other side effects or considerations
			F: ++	
Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs				
Naproxen (Aleve, Naprosyn)	Migraine headache	550-1100 mg/day in divided doses	Cog: + S: 0 A: 0 Motor: 0 D: ++ Com: + F: +	Gastrointestinal upset, dyspepsia, xerostomia, oral ulceration, glossitis, gastrointestinal mucosal hemorrhage, abrupt acute renal insufficiency, fluid retention, worsening of congestive heart failure, memory loss, confusion, dizziness, headache.
Ketoprofen (Orudis)	Migraine headache	150 mg/day in divided doses	Cog: + S: 0 A: 0 Motor: 0 D: ++ Com: + F: +	Gastrointestinal upset, dyspepsia, xerostomia, oral ulceration, glossitis, gastrointestinal mucosal hemorrhage, abrupt acute renal insufficiency, fluid retention, worsening of congestive heart failure, memory loss, confusion, dizziness, headache.

Cog = cognition; S = sedation; A = agitation or mania; Motor = discoordination; D = dysphagia; Com = communication; F = falls.

The likelihood rating scale for encountering the side effects is as follows: 0 = Almost no probability of encountering side effects. 0/+ = Slight probability of encountering side effects with higher doses. + = Little likelihood of encountering side effects. +/++ = Low probability of encountering side effects; however, probability increases with increased dosage. ++ = Medium likelihood of encountering side effects. +++ = High likelihood of encountering side effects, particularly with high doses. ++++ = Highest likelihood of encountering side effects; best to avoid in at-risk patients.