**Topiramate for Headaches – information for GPs**

Please print and share this information with the patient.

Topiramate is also used in epilepsy.

**Instructions for starting**

Start at 25mg once daily, increasing by 25mg every week until on 50mg twice daily.

Week 1 – take 25mg in the evening

Week 2 – take 25mg in the morning and 25mg in the evening

Week 3 – take 25mg in the morning and 50mg in the evening

Week 4 – take 50mg twice daily

At this dose, keep taking the Topiramate for a minimum of 8 weeks, keeping a headache diary to assess if there is any benefit.

If there is no sufficient benefit it can be increased in similar steps to a maximum of 100mg twice daily.

**Most important side effects\***

* Can cause mood changes, and speech and concentration difficulties
* Tingling or pins and needles. This is benign and usually subsides with time.
* Weight loss
* Can cause urinary calculus, so keep hydrated especially in hot weather and with exercise
* Rarely causes acute angle closure glaucoma, usually within 1 month of starting, so patients are advised to seek medical attention if any unexpected change in vision occurs.

**Pregnancy –**

**Avoid if there is a risk of pregnancy as there is an increased risk of foetal malformations e.g. cleft palate**

**\*Full list of side effects according to the BNF:**

**Common or very common**

Alopecia; anaemia; anxiety; appetite abnormal; asthenia; behaviour abnormal; cognitive impairment; concentration impaired; confusion; constipation; cough; depression; diarrhoea; dizziness; drowsiness; dry mouth; dyspnoea; ear discomfort; eye disorders; feeling abnormal; fever (in children); gait abnormal; gastrointestinal discomfort; gastrointestinal disorders; haemorrhage; hypersensitivity; joint disorders; malaise; memory loss; mood altered; movement disorders; muscle complaints; muscle weakness; nasal complaints; nasopharyngitis; nausea; oral disorders; pain; seizures; sensation abnormal; skin reactions; sleep disorders; speech impairment; taste altered; tinnitus; tremor; urinary disorders; urolithiases; vertigo (in children); vision disorders; vomiting (in children); weight changes

**Uncommon**

Abnormal sensation in eye; anhidrosis; arrhythmias; aura; cerebellar syndrome; consciousness impaired; crying; drooling; dry eye; dysgraphia; dysphonia; eosinophilia (in children); facial swelling; hallucinations; hearing impairment; hyperthermia (in children); hypokalaemia; hypotension; influenza like illness; learning disability (in children); leucopenia; lymphadenopathy; metabolic acidosis; musculoskeletal stiffness; palpitations; pancreatitis; paranasal sinus hypersecretion; peripheral coldness; peripheral neuropathy; polydipsia; psychotic disorder; renal pain; sexual dysfunction; smell altered; suicidal tendencies; syncope; thinking abnormal; thirst; thrombocytopenia; vasodilation

**Rare or very rare**

Eye inflammation; face oedema; glaucoma; hepatic disorders; limb discomfort; neutropenia; Raynaud's phenomenon; renal tubular acidosis; severe cutaneous adverse reactions (SCARs); unresponsive to stimuli