

# Considerations regarding selected oral adjuvant analgesics in older people



Medication	Starting dose	Considerations
<b>Amitriptyline</b>	5-10mg nocte	Tricyclic antidepressant (TCA), first line treatment option for neuropathic pain Assists with sleep, although risk of confusion/delirium Slows cardiac conduction: risk of arrhythmia, medication interactions Anticholinergic side effects including dry mouth, orthostatic hypotension, blurred vision, urinary hesitancy Toxicity in overdose Close monitoring for side effects required by nurse practitioner, nursing team and pharmacist
<b>Nortriptyline</b>	5-10mg nocte	TCA, metabolite of amitriptyline, first line treatment option for neuropathic pain Possibly less sedation; may be preferred in older people
<b>Venlafaxine</b>	37.5mg daily	Serotonin and norepinephrine reuptake inhibitor (SNRI) antidepressant; first line treatment option for neuropathic pain Large dose variability: may sedate or stimulate
<b>Duloxetine</b>	30mg nocte	SNRI antidepressant, first line treatment option for neuropathic pain May assist in widespread pain (listed on PBS for depression) Sedation; may assist with sleep disturbance, generalised anxiety
<b>Pregabalin</b>	25mg bd	First line treatment option for neuropathic pain Role as adjuvant with opioids and NSAIDs in nociceptive pain Dose reduce in renal failure (e.g. single nocte dose) Common side effects include: sedation, dizziness, weight gain, peripheral oedema May assist with sleep disturbance
<b>Gabapentin</b>	100mg bd-tds	First line treatment option for neuropathic pain As per pregabalin, although appears less potent, shorter acting Not PBS listed, although generic products available Dose related side effects
<b>Valproate</b>	100mg bd-tds	Little evidence for use in neuropathic pain May provide benefit in mood disorder Nausea, gastrointestinal upset and hair loss are potential risks Avoid in liver impairment May reduce bone density if used long-term
<b>Carbamazepine</b>	100mg bd	Antiepileptic; indicated in trigeminal neuralgia only Significant risk of drowsiness, balance disturbance, blurred vision and nausea in older people Rash and liver impairment are rare complications
<b>Clonidine</b>	25microg bd-tds	Anti-hypertensive: dizziness, slow heart rate, falls risk Weak analgesia, anti-hyperalgesic effect Sedative Useful when anxiety or opioid dose reduction considered