

General Guidelines for Treatment With Preventive Medications

- Migraine preventive medications should be considered when:
 - recurrent migraines significantly interfere with daily life.
 - migraines are frequent.
 - acute medications cause adverse effects.
 - the patient prefers to take a daily preventive medication.
- Patients should have realistic goals.
- Therapy should be started with a low dose of the selected medication and increased until benefits are achieved or until adverse effects occur.
- Each medication should receive an adequate trial of two to three months.
- Patients should avoid overuse of symptomatic medications; they may interfere with preventive therapy.
- Use of a long-acting formulation may improve compliance.
- Patients should understand how to use a particular treatment and what side effects are likely.
- Patients should keep a headache diary that records headache frequency, severity, duration, response to therapy, and side effects.
- After a period of stability, physicians should consider discontinuing the preventive medication. (In many cases, patients will remain headache-free for a prolonged period.)