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## What is Candesartan?

Candesartan is a drug widely used for blood pressure. Although it is not licensed for the prevention of migraine it is used extensively on the Continent and is supported by migraine trial data.

## How should I take it?

Candesartan comes in tablet form and should be taken once daily initially at low dose. It has a very low side effect profile but it is best to start at a low dose and work upwards. The recommended starting dose is 4mg. Increase by 4mg every 2 weeks up to a maximum dose of 32mg providing there are no side effects. The patient needs to be on this dose for at least 6 weeks before they can judge whether the medication has been effective or not. You do not need to increase the dose above any dose that helps to control the headaches that you have been getting.

## What are its side effects?

It is expedient to just keep a check on blood pressure during this time although the drug doesn't seem to have an effect on normal blood pressure.

Do not take Candesartan tablets if: you are allergic to candesartan cilexetil or any of the other ingredients of this medicine or if you are more than 3 months pregnant (it is also better to avoid Candesartan tablets in early pregnancy).

Stop taking Candesartan tablets and seek medical help immediately if you have any of the following allergic reactions: difficulties in breathing, with or without swelling of the face, lips, tongue and/or throat, swelling of the face, lips, tongue and/or throat, which may cause difficulties in swallowing, severe itching of the skin (with raised lumps).

Candesartan tablets may cause a reduction in number of white blood cells. Your resistance to infection may be decreased and you may notice tiredness, an infection or a fever. If this happens contact your doctor. Your doctor may occasionally do blood tests to check whether Candesartan tablets has had any effect on your blood (agranulocytosis).

Other possible side effects include: Feeling dizzy/spinning sensation. Headache. Respiratory infection. Low blood pressure. This may make you feel faint or dizzy. Changes in blood test results: An increased amount of potassium in your blood, especially if you already have kidney problems or heart failure. If this is severe you may notice tiredness, weakness, irregular heart beat or pins and needles. Effects on how your kidneys work, especially if you already have kidney problems or heart failure. In very rare cases, kidney failure may occur.

**How long do I need to be on the tablets for?** You need to take the medication at the maximum dose you can tolerate for at least 8 weeks before a benefit can be judged. If there is a benefit then

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they should be taken for at least 4-6 months after which time you may like to discuss with your doctor whether you can withdraw them.

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