

TRIPTANS for Migraine Management

The Ontario Drug Policy Research Network (ODPRN) conducted a drug class review on the effectiveness, safety and accessibility of triptan medications using multiple research methods.

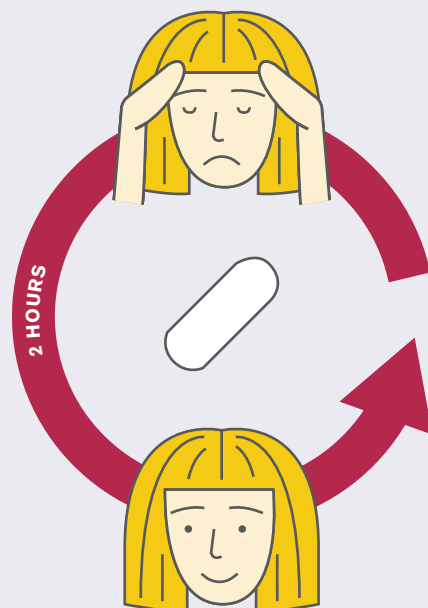
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USING TRIPTANS TO RELIEVE MIGRAINES

Triptans are recommended by the 2013 Canadian Headache Society guidelines as a component of care for moderate to severe migraine sufferers.

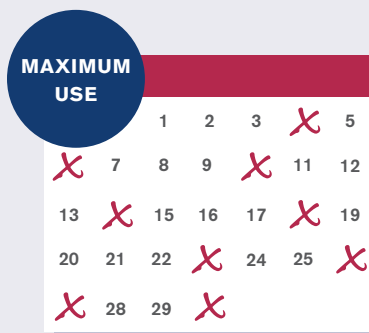
Between 43 and 76% of patients experience migraine relief at 2 hours after taking any type of available triptan.



Triptans are equally or more effective for relieving migraines at 2 hours compared to other drugs such as acetaminophen, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, acetylsalicylic acid and ergots.

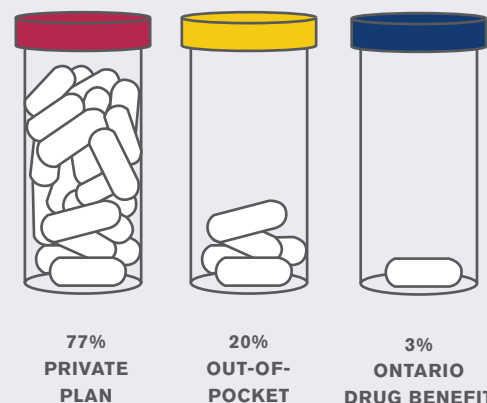
Triptans are generally safe but excessive use can lead to medication overuse headaches.

Although guidelines recommend the use of triptans on 9 days per month or less, there are currently no quantity limits on publicly-funded triptans in Ontario.



HOW ONTARIANS ACCESS TRIPTANS

Near the end of 2013, most triptans in Ontario were paid for by private drug plans or out-of-pocket.



Ontarians without drug coverage often cannot afford triptans. Other less expensive drugs may not be optimal alternatives.

The overall volume of triptans dispensed through Ontario's public drug plan is more than 5 times lower than the national average...

OTHER PROVINCES



ONTARIO



...but among those accessing publicly-funded triptans, Ontario dispenses more units of triptans per person compared to all other provinces studied.

Physicians may not prescribe triptans because...

- Triptans are perceived to be unsafe
- Alternative drugs are perceived to work just as well
- There is little awareness of how to access publicly-funded triptans

HOW TO USE THIS INFORMATION

- ✓ Refer to the 2013 [Canadian Headache Society Guidelines](#) on the safe and appropriate treatment of migraines
- ✓ If patients are appropriate candidates, try them on triptans and monitor their response to these drugs. Switch triptan types if necessary to find the best triptan for a patient in terms of effectiveness and safety.
- ✓ Visit the Ontario Public Drug Programs website to learn how you can [access triptans](#) through the Ontario Drug Benefit, and which patients are [eligible](#).