

Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services

Drug Information Sheet: **Tricyclic Antidepressants**

amitriptyline (Elavil)

clomipramine (Anafranil)

desipramine (Norpramin)

protriptyline (Vivactil)

nortriptyline (Pamelor)

doxepin (Sinequan)

imipramine (Tofranil)

Other: _____

The tricyclic antidepressant medications are used in the treatment of depression, and can improve overall mood, ability to concentrate, sleep and eating patterns, and physical activity. In addition, these agents may be useful in anxiety disorders.

Estimates are that eight or nine out of every ten patients with depression can be helped by currently available antidepressant medications.

All classes of antidepressants are equally effective, although some may be better than others for certain patients. That is, one class of medication may work particularly well for one person, while another person may have more success with a medication from a different class.

Like any medication, these antidepressant medications can have some side effects:

Common

constipation

drowsiness

dizziness

dry mouth

Less Common

blurred vision

decreased sex drive

weight gain

skin sensitivity to the sun

Rare

confusion

unusual heartbeat

seizures

Antidepressant medications work gradually, and may take up to several weeks to reach their full effect. Don't lose patience; it will take time before you will feel better.

Remember, these medications must be taken regularly to have their full beneficial effect.