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Low Dose Naltrexone for Chronic Pain? New Uses for an Old Drug

Naltrexone is a medication that is traditionally used in a dose of 50 mg to help people who have stopped taking narcotics to stay drug-free, and alcoholics to stay alcohol-free. But over the past several years, PubMed, a service of the



U.S. National Library of Medicine, has posted many studies and case reports about the benefits of Low-Dose Naltrexone (LDN), in doses of 4.5 mg or less, to treat chronic pain conditions such as fibromyalgia, complex regional pain syndrome, migraine headache, and interstitial cystitis.

LDN is an inexpensive drug with infrequent and mild side effects. LDN is thought to reduce pain by blocking the production of inflammatory substances in the human body. Much research is being done at the Stanford University Department of Anesthesiology, Perioperative, and Pain Medicine, Stanford, CA. Researchers there recently used their Collaborative Health Outcomes Information Registry to determine whether LDN improves pain, fatigue, sleep, mood, or physical function in chronic pain patients. They found that pain and depression both improved in patients who were prescribed LDN. The patients' physical function improved after using this well tolerated, inexpensive medication.

LDN has also been used to help patients with Multiple Sclerosis, cancer, Crohn's disease and various autoimmune disorders.

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If you have questions about LDN or how compounding may help with problems that are resistant to traditional therapy, ask our pharmacist.

Note:

It is doubtful that large scale studies will ever be done to investigate potential indications for LDN because its expired patent offers no profit motive to pharmaceutical manufacturers. Therefore, Low Dose Naltrexone (LDN, in doses such as 4.5 mg) is not commercially available; it is a prescription medication that can be compounded by our pharmacy.

Reference:

[J Pain. April 2016; 17\(4\):S79](#)

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