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Low-Dose Naltrexone Overview

Low-dose naltrexone (LDN) is a medication that is sometimes **used in lower doses than usual to help manage certain chronic pain and inflammatory conditions**. Naltrexone is approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for treating opioid and alcohol dependence, but at much higher doses than those used for LDN. **When used at low doses (typically 1.5 to 4.5 mg per day), it is considered "off-label," meaning it is not officially approved for these other uses, but some doctors may prescribe it based on current research and patient needs.**^{[1][2][3]}

How does LDN work?

LDN is thought to help by changing how the immune system and nervous system respond to pain and inflammation. It may reduce the activity of certain immune cells and lower the release of chemicals that cause inflammation and pain.^{[2][4]}

What conditions might LDN help with? Research suggests that LDN may help with symptoms in conditions such as:

- **Fibromyalgia (widespread muscle pain and fatigue)**
- Multiple sclerosis (a disease affecting the nerves)
- Crohn's disease (a type of inflammatory bowel disease)
- **Some chronic pain conditions, including diabetic neuropathy and complex regional pain syndrome**
- Certain skin conditions, such as lichen planopilaris and Hailey-Hailey disease^{[1][2][3][4][5][6][7]}

What are the benefits?

Some studies show that LDN can reduce pain, improve quality of life, and help with symptoms like fatigue and sleep problems in some people. However, most of the evidence comes from small studies or case reports, and more research is needed to know how well it works for each condition.^{[1][2][3][5][6][7][8]}

Is LDN safe?

LDN is **generally well tolerated**. Most people do not have serious side effects. Some may experience trouble sleeping, vivid dreams, or mild stomach upset. **LDN should not be taken with opioid pain medications, as it can block their effects.**^{[1][3][5][9]}

What else should patients know?

- LDN is not a cure, but it may help manage symptoms.

- It is not approved by the FDA for chronic pain or inflammatory diseases, so insurance may not cover it.

- More research is needed to understand who will benefit most from LDN and the best dose for each condition.^{[1][2][3][5][6][7][8]}

Always talk with a healthcare provider before starting or stopping any medication, including LDN.

References

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