# **Migraine preventive medications – Evidence summary**

| **Medication** | **BASH\* 2019**1 | **BMJ Best practice 2023**2 | **European Consensus statement 2021**3 **and 2022 update**4 | **AAN\*\* 2012**5 **& 2015**6 | **AHS\*\* Consensus statement 2021**7 **and 2024 update**8 | **SIGN 2018**9 | **International Headache Society\*\*\* 2025**10 |
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| **Antidepressants** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Amitriptyline | Recommended | Recommended; low quality evidence | Recommended 2nd | Level B | Level B | Conditional recommendation | Moderate/weak (episodic) |
| Venlafaxine |  | Recommended for comorbid depression |  | Level B | Level B | Limited evidence |  |
| **Beta blockers** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Propranolol | Recommended | Recommended | Recommended 1st | Level A | Level A | Strong recommendation | Low/weak |
| Atenolol | Appendix | Recommended | Recommended 1st | Level B | Level B | Limited evidence |  |
| Metoprolol | Appendix | Recommended | Recommended 1st | Level A | Level A | Limited evidence |  |
| Nadolol | Appendix |  |  | Level B | Level B |  |  |
| Timolol | Appendix | Recommended |  | Level A | Level A |  |  |
| **Antihypertensives** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Candesartan | Recommended |  | Recommended 1st | Level C | Level A | Conditional recommendation | Moderate/weak (episodic) |
| Lisinopril | Appendix |  |  | Level C | Level B | Limited evidence | Low/weak |
| Flunarizine | Appendix – not available in UK | Recommended but limited access | Recommended 2nd |  |  | Conditional recommendation |  |
| Verapamil |  | 1st choice for hemiplegic/ brainstem aura; used in migraine with aura |  | Level U |  | Limited evidence for migraine |  |
| **Antiepileptics** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Topiramate | Recommended | Recommended | Recommended 1st | Level A | Level A | Strong recommendation | Moderate/strong (episodic); Low/weak (chronic) |
| Sodium valproate | Appendix |  | Recommended 2nd | Level A | Level A | Conditional recommendation | Very low/weak |
| Lamotrigine |  |  |  | Other |  | Limited/no evidence | Very low/weak |
| Gabapentin |  |  |  | Level U |  | Strong recommendation **against** use |  |
| Zonisamide |  | Limited evidence |  |  |  | No evidence for efficacy |  |
| Levetiracetam |  |  |  |  |  | Limited evidence; more needed | Very low/weak |
| **Anti-CGRP meds** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Galcanezumab | Recommended | 2nd line | Recommended 1st |  | Level A |  | High/strong |
| Erenumab | Recommended | 2nd line | Recommended 1st |  | Level A |  | High (episodic) Moderate (chronic)/strong |
| Fremanezumb | Recommended | 2nd line | Recommended 1st |  | Level A |  | High/strong |
| Eptinezumab |  | 2nd line | Recommended 1st |  | Level A |  | High (chronic) Moderate (episodic) /strong |
| Atogepant |  |  |  |  | Level A |  | High/strong |
| Rimegepant |  |  |  |  |  |  | Moderate/strong |
| **Other** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Onabotulinumtoxin A (chronic migraine only) | Recommended | Recommended; assess over time | Recommended |  | Level A | Strong recommendation (with 3 or more preventive failures) | High/strong |
| Occipital nerve injections | Appendix |  |  |  |  | Insufficient evidence; widely used |  |
| Pizotifen |  |  |  |  |  | Insufficient evidence; widely used |  |
| Frovatriptan (menstrual migraine) |  | Appendix | Appendix | Level A | Level A | Strong recommendation |  |
| Melatonin |  |  | No recommendation: Limited evidence |  |  |  |  |

\* British Association for the Study of Headache (BASH) guideline listed recommended preventives in the text then all preventive treatments with randomized controlled trial evidence in an appendix

\*\* American Academy of Neurology (AAN) and American Headache Society (AHS): Level A=established as effective; Level B=probably effective; Level C=possibly effective; Level U=inadequate or conflicting data; Other=possibly or probably ineffective

\*\*\*Quality of evidence rated as high, moderate, low or very low; strength of recommendation rated as strong or weak in favour

**References**

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