Tramadol

FDA-approved uses:
Moderate to severe pain

Alternatives:
No medication is required. Non-medication modalities such as physical treatment and psychological treatment, pain interventions, and other medications are potential alternatives.

How it works:
Tramadol has two mechanisms of action, doing two things to reduce pain. (1) It is a centrally acting opioid that has typical opioid properties. It is not a Federal controlled substance but it is a controlled substance in many states. (2) It has action on certain neurotransmitters in the brainstem that help block pain signals.

Side effects & General risks:
The most common side effects of tramadol are stomach upset and constipation. Seizures can occur in patients who abuse tramadol, use antidepressants or who have a history of seizures. Dependence/addiction is always possible with any medication, but the risk of tramadol addiction appears to be very low. All opioids are dangerous in persons with asthma or other lung disease, prostate problems, low blood pressure, head injury or increased intracranial pressure. Side effects that are common are: headache, nausea, constipation, dental disease from dry mouth, dizziness, sweating, dry mouth, abdominal pain, and low blood pressure causing lightheadedness.

This is a supplement to the standardized drug information sheets. Please see the standardized drug information sheet for detailed information about risks, side effects, interactions, and other important information. General risks: Any medication may interfere with the ability to drive, concentrate, or operate machinery; patients must be responsible for their own behavior and should not engage in any dangerous activity if there is any question of impairment. All medications have side effects and drug interactions, some serious, some fatal. Let all of your practitioners and pharmacist know about every substance used. Alcohol, herbals, or illegal drugs are not considered safe with these medications. Assume no medication is safe during pregnancy or while breast feeding. The medication may interfere with birth control. Almost any medication can cause sleepiness, insomnia, dizziness, confusion, hallucinations, anxiety, panic, constipation or diarrhea, headache, chest pain and nausea or vomiting, among others. These could cause physical injury, such as dizziness causing one to fall down stairs. Many reduce blood pressure, which could cause fainting, dizziness, stroke, or other problems. Most medications should NOT be stopped suddenly because of the risk of withdrawal.

Common doses & Time to effect:
Tramadol 50mg tablet, usually limited to no more than 8 doses per day, lasting approximately 4-6 hours per dose.
Tramadol/APAP, a combination of tramadol and acetaminophen with the same limit as above.
Tramadol ER, a once daily preparation that provides benefit after about 72 hours of regular dosing.

Financial:
Dr. Anderson has never received payment in exchange for prescribing a medication. Dr. Anderson has no financial relationship with the manufacturers of tramadol products.

Insurance coverage:
Because these are generic medications, insurance typically covers these agents.

Scientific evidence & References:
Some scientific evidence supportive of the use of the medication is listed in this section. Of course, scientific information changes rapidly and the information listed may become outdated or incorrect overnight. Tramadol has evidence-based efficacy in chronic pain states and acute pain states. Tramadol is proven to help improve pain control when added to an opioid such as morphine or fentanyl. Tramadol with acetaminophen has been shown effective for diabetic neuropathy pain. Tramadol is a first-line pain medication for some conditions and a second-line pain medication for others, and may be used in combination with other pain medications.

References:


Disclaimer:
This is for informational purposes only. This does not replace the instructions you received from Dr. Anderson or any other practitioner, constitute medical treatment, establishment of a patient-physician relationship, constitute any form of recommendation, prescription or medical advice, or imply that the medication is appropriate or FDA approved for any condition. This information may be outdated and is not a complete listing of instructions, doses, uses, or side effects. If this was prescribed to you, you must review this information with your pharmacist and prescriber before starting the medication.