

Information for Patients about  
**Gabapentin**



Gabapentin is a medicine which is used to treat certain types of pain and to treat epilepsy. You are on this medicine to treat your pain.

**Dosage:** Take only as directed. These directions may change. Gabapentin is usually started at a low dose and then increased slowly to find the best dose. (Please see the section on increasing Gabapentin).

## Administration

- It may take as little as a few days before you feel any pain relief, but it can take longer. It may take time to get to the right dose for you and to allow the medicine to build up in your body.

You may take Gabapentin with or without food, **but do not take liquid antacids or indigestion liquids within two hours of taking Gabapentin.**

If you are female and plan to have children, you must tell your GP before starting this medication. Women of childbearing age must use effective contraception.

## Possible Side Effects:

- The most common side effects are dizziness and tiredness – if you experience these symptoms do not drive or operate machinery. You must tell the DVLA if you are on any medicines which affect your driving.
- The combination of Gabapentin with alcohol can cause significant drowsiness. We advise you not to drink when you first take this medication, and whilst increasing the dose. Once you are on a stable dose, you may drink alcohol if the drowsiness has stopped.
- Less common side effects are diarrhoea, dry mouth, swelling, weight gain, abnormal way of walking, memory loss, shakiness, abnormal thinking, rash and difficulty with vision.

- Uncommon side effects include, weakness, back or joint pain, constipation, flatulence, nausea, confusion, decreased sensitivity to touch, spinning sensation, shortness of breath and inflammation of the throat.



Usually these side effects will pass but if they do not, or you experience any unusual effects you should discuss this with your GP, Community Pharmacist or NHS 24 on **08454 24 24 24**, especially if you feel that you are not able to walk as normal, are forgetful, confused, or experience visual disturbance or nausea.

## Increasing Gabapentin

The dosage regimen below is a guide on how to increase your medicine. You may increase it more slowly if you feel you are getting side effects, or you can stay at a lower dose if you are getting good pain relief (you don't have to keep increasing the dose if you do not need to). However do not increase your dose faster than the recommended increase below.

|               | <b>Morning</b> | <b>Afternoon</b> | <b>Night</b> |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|--------------|
| <b>Week 1</b> | No medicine    | No medicine      | 300mg        |
| <b>Week 2</b> | 300mg          | No medicine      | 300mg        |
| <b>Week 3</b> | 300mg          | 300mg            | 300mg        |

Remain on this dose for 2 weeks. If you are not getting enough pain relief, then continue to increase the dose as below.

|               |       |       |       |
|---------------|-------|-------|-------|
| <b>Week 4</b> | 300mg | 300mg | 600mg |
| <b>Week 5</b> | 600mg | 300mg | 600mg |
| <b>Week 6</b> | 600mg | 600mg | 600mg |

- If you experience side effects do not continue to increase the dose. Reduce the dose back to the previous dose for one week and then try to increase the dose again.

- If you continue to experience side effects that you are unable to tolerate then you should visit your GP and discuss increasing your medication using the table below:

## Dosage for slowly increasing Gabapentin

|               | <b>Morning</b> | <b>Afternoon</b> | <b>Night</b> |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|--------------|
| <b>Week 1</b> | No medicine    | No medicine      | 100mg        |
| <b>Week 2</b> | 100mg          | No medicine      | 100mg        |
| <b>Week 3</b> | 100mg          | 100mg            | 100mg        |
| <b>Week 4</b> | 300mg          | 300mg            | 600mg        |
| <b>Week 5</b> | 600mg          | 300mg            | 600mg        |
| <b>Week 6</b> | 600mg          | 600mg            | 600mg        |
| <b>Week 7</b> | 200mg          | 200mg            | 300mg        |
| <b>Week 8</b> | 300mg          | 200mg            | 300mg        |
| <b>Week 9</b> | 300mg          | 300mg            | 300mg        |

## Stopping Medication:

If you experience any side effects whilst increasing Gabapentin please reduce the dose back to the previous dose. However, if you are concerned about any side effects you should speak to your GP, Community Pharmacist or NHS 24.

If they decide that you should stop taking this medicine please do not suddenly stop taking Gabapentin, unless advised to do so. The dose should be lowered by missing one dose every 3 days. Below is an example of how to reduce the dose if you were on 300mg three times a day, but you should always contact your GP for directions.

|                  | <b>Morning</b> | <b>Afternoon</b> | <b>Night</b> |
|------------------|----------------|------------------|--------------|
| <b>Day 1 - 3</b> | No medicine    | 300mg            | 300mg        |
| <b>Day 4 - 6</b> | No medicine    | No medicine      | 300mg        |
| <b>Day 7</b>     | Stop           |                  |              |



## **Remember!**

- Don't run out of medicine.
- Ask for a repeat prescription before your medication is finished.
- If you have any questions about this medicine please contact your GP, community pharmacist or NHS 24 for advice.

**This leaflet is a summary of some information. However, you should still always read the manufacturers information which comes with your medication.**

Notes:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



