

Information for Adult Patients who are Prescribed

Pregabalin

For the Treatment of Pain



This information is not intended to replace your doctor's advice. We advise you to read the manufacturer's information for patients, which your pharmacist will supply with your medicine. Please keep all medicines away from children, vulnerable adults or pets.

Why have I been prescribed pregabalin?

Pregabalin is used to treat some types of persistent pain.

It is especially good for nerve pain, such as burning, shooting or stabbing pain.

Pregabalin belongs to the anticonvulsant group of medications, which are also used to treat epilepsy. You are on this medicine to treat your pain.

How does pregabalin work?

Pregabalin works by changing the way that nerves send messages to your brain. If the messages are reduced, then the pain will be reduced.

How long will it take to work?

It may take 2 - 4 weeks before you feel pain relief. It may take longer (up to 2 months) to get to the right dose for you and to allow the medicine to build up in your body.

Pregabalin does not work for everyone. If you do not feel any improvement in your pain after 6 – 8 weeks, do not suddenly stop taking the tablets but speak to your doctor.

What should I expect?

It is rarely possible to help long-term pain completely by using medicines alone. This is because long-term pain arises through many different mechanisms, and most medicines only work for one of these.

In trials, most medicines for long-term pain provide on average a 30% reduction in pain. Some pains do not seem to respond to any painkilling medicines.

Medicines work best if you combine them with other ways of managing symptoms such as regular activity and exercise and doing things that are satisfying or enjoyable, such as work, study and social activities. Setting goals to help improve your life is an important way to see if these medicines are helping.

You should discuss, with your doctor, what you expect from the treatment.

When should I take it?

You should take pregabalin twice a day, morning and night. It is important to take your pregabalin dose regularly, as prescribed for this medicine to work properly. It is not a medication that you should use on an 'as required' basis.

You usually start pregabalin at a low dose and increase it slowly to find the right dose for you. You and your doctor, nurse or community pharmacist will decide between you how quickly you increase your medicine.

Below is a guide on how to increase your Pregabalin dose. You may increase it more slowly if you feel you are getting side effects, for example, by going back a step for an extra week before increasing again.

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).

	AM	PM
Step 1	75mg	75mg
Step 2	150mg	150mg
Step 3	225mg	225mg
Step 4	300mg	300mg

If you are experiencing significant side effects with the above, please discuss using the table below with your doctor, nurse or community pharmacist.

	AM	PM
Step 1	25mg	25mg
Step 2	50mg	50mg
Step 3	75mg	75mg

How should I take pregabalin?

You should swallow the medicine whole with a glass of water. You can take pregabalin before or after food. If you are taking antacid medication, please wait 2 hours before taking pregabalin.

What if I forget or miss a dose?

Take it as soon as you remember. However, if it is almost time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and take the next dose as normal. Do not take two doses at the same time.

What are the possible side effects?

We advise you to read the information leaflet that is included with your medication. Below are some side effects associated with pregabalin use. The full list of potential side effects can be found in the leaflet that comes with the medication.

Very Common May affect more than 1 in 10 people	Common May affect up to 1 in 10 people
Drowsiness Dizziness Headache	Increased appetite Confusion, disorientation, irritability, elation Poor concentration Memory impairment Clumsiness, tremor Difficulty speaking Tingling or numbness Sleepiness, tiredness, fatigue Insomnia (poor sleep) Blurred or double vision Vertigo, Problems with balance, falls Dry mouth Constipation or diarrhoea, Nausea and vomiting Flatulence Decreased sexual interest Difficulties with erection Weight gain Fluid retention, swelling Feeling drunk Muscle or joint pain Sore throat

Generally side effects are worse after starting pregabalin or increasing the dose. It is important to persist in taking pregabalin as these side effects are usually mild and will wear off after several days.

Drowsiness is usually temporary. If you feel drowsy, you should not drive or operate machinery.

Drowsiness may occur as you increase your dose. If you feel especially drowsy in the morning it may help to take your night time dose earlier in the evening.

The risk of drowsiness may be increased if you are taking other medicines for pain such as other anticonvulsant medications, antidepressants or morphine like medications. What should I tell the doctor?

If these side effects are severe, or last for more than a few days, or if you experience blurred vision, trembling, irregular heart beat, difficulty passing urine or a reaction to this medication you should get advice from your GP, Community Pharmacist or **NHS 24** on **111**.

Also, you can help make sure medicines remain as safe as possible by reporting any unwanted side-effects via the internet at www.mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard alternatively you can call Freephone **0808 100 3352**

Can I take pregabalin long-term?

Yes, if it helps. You may wish to reduce treatment every so often, to check if your pain is still a problem. You should speak to your GP or pain specialist about gradually reducing your medication over a period of time.

Can I drive?

Please see note above, If you experience drowsiness you should not drive. Please remember, you are responsible for deciding whether you are fit to drive.

Can I drink alcohol?

Alcohol and pregabalin together cause sleepiness and poor concentration.

You should avoid alcohol completely when you first start taking pregabalin or when you increase your dose. You should also avoid alcohol if you are going to drive or operate machinery.

Once you are on a stable dose, you should be able to drink modest amounts of alcohol, but only if the drowsiness has stopped. You must take care with alcohol if you are also prescribed other medications that can cause sleepiness and poor concentration.

What should I tell the doctor?

- If you are allergic to any medicines.
- If you are taking any other medicines or herbal medicines.
- If you are pregnant or breastfeeding or if you are planning to become pregnant in the future.
- If you have or have had a history of excessive alcohol use, recreational drug use or addiction to prescribed or over-the-counter medication.

What if I want to stop taking pregabalin?

Do not stop taking pregabalin suddenly as you might experience withdrawal symptoms. Speak to your healthcare professional (doctor, nurse, pharmacist) who will be able to supervise a gradual reduction.

Remember!

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

For more information about managing chronic pain, please see www.paindata.org

Much of the information in this document has been reproduced from the Faculty of Pain Medicine's patient information leaflet of a similar name which can be accessed here:

<https://www.britishpainsociety.org/british-pain-society-publications/patient-publications/>