



Gabapentin

Patient Information

Developed by The Pain Team, Tayside Integrated Pain Service, and
has been reviewed by other staff and patients

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The aim of this leaflet is to answer some questions often asked by patients. Your doctor has prescribed the drug Gabapentin. Please read the leaflet included in your prescription.

What is Gabapentin?

Gabapentin is an anti-epileptic / anti-convulsant drug that can be used in to treat pain caused by damage to the nerves (neuropathic).

How to take Gabapentin

Gabapentin needs to be gradually increased over a period of time until a maximum daily dose of 600mgs three times a day is reached. Follow the table below taking from 1 tablet a day to a maximum of 2 tablets three times a day:

	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Step 1			300mg
Step 2	300mg		300mg
Step 3	300mg	300mg	300mg

Stay on three capsules a day for about a week and if your pain relief is adequate, keep on this dose.

However, if your pain is still a problem, then increase as follows:

	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Step 1	300mg	300mg	600mg
Step 2	600mg	300mg	600mg
Step 3	600mg	600mg	600mg

At this point, you should be taking 600mgs (2 capsules) three times a day. Continue on this dose until advised otherwise

Important information

- ◆ You must inform your doctor if you are trying to, or become pregnant while taking Gabapentin
- ◆ The effect of Gabapentin can be reduced if you take it at the same time as an antacid. It is therefore recommended to take it two hours after an antacid.

If you need any further information or advice, please contact us on the appropriate numbers on the front page of this leaflet.

We hope you found the information in this leaflet helpful.

If you have any comments about the content, please let us know. Comments made by other patients have helped in the development of this leaflet.

If at any time, as you are increasing the dose, you find the side-effects unacceptable, go back to the previous dose and stay on that for a day or two. Try increasing again, but if there is still a problem go back to the previous dose.

The dose can be increased further if necessary.

Slow titration table for elderly patients or patients who are sensitive to Gabapentin

	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Step 1			100mg
Step 2		100mg	100mg
Step 3	100mg	100mg	100mg
Step 4	100mg	100mg	200mg
Step 5	100mg	200mg	200mg
Step 6	200mg	200mg	200mg
Step 7	200mg	200mg	300mg
Step 8	200mg	300mg	300mg
Step 9	300mg	300mg	300mg

Stay on this dose for a few days and if pain relief is adequate remain at this, but if pain is still a problem, try increasing the tablets as follows (see overleaf).

However, if at any level you find the side effects intolerable, drop back to the previous dose and stay on that for a day or two before trying to increase again.

	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Step 1	300mg	300mg	400mg
Step 2	300mg	400mg	400mg
Step 3	400mg	400mg	400mg
Step 4	400mg	400mg	500mg
Step 5	400mg	500mg	500mg
Step 6	500mg	500mg	500mg
Step 7	500mg	500mg	600mg
Step 8	500mg	600mg	600mg
Step 9	600mg	600mg	600mg

Continue on this dose as advised

Side Effects

As well as benefits, all medicines potentially have unwanted effects, called side-effects and Gabapentin is no different. Increasing the tablets over a period of time this helps to reduce side-effects and possibly even avoid them.

Common	Occasional
Dizziness	Dry mouth
Tiredness	Visual disturbance
Loss of balance	Muscle weakness
Gastric discomfort	Weight increase
Tremor / Shakiness	Severe Headache
Drowsiness If affected, do not drive or work machinery, until effect has worn off)	

Some of these side-effects wear off over time and it is worthwhile persisting if you can. If they are unbearable, reduce the dose for a few days and then try increasing when you feel you can.

What should I do if I forget to take my tablets?

If you forget to take a dose, take it as soon as you remember, unless it is near the time for your next dose. Do **not** take two doses at once.

What should I do if someone accidentally takes my tablets or I take too many?

Call your doctor or hospital straight away, and they will need to know the name and number of the tablets taken.

How long do I need to take the medication for?

Nerve pain can be a long-term problem and you may need to take Gabapentin for some time. Continue to take it unless your doctor or pain specialist nurse advises you to reduce or stop the dose. It is important to reduce the dose gradually rather than stopping it suddenly.