



## **Accurate Clinic**

2401 Veterans Memorial Blvd. Suite16  
Kenner, LA 70062 - 4799  
Phone: 504.472.6130 Fax: 504.472.6128

**[www.AccurateClinic.com](http://www.AccurateClinic.com)**

### **Why are Gabapentin & Lyrica prescribed?**

Originally used to help control seizures in people with epilepsy, gabapentin suppresses irritated nerves. It is very effective at preventing migraine headaches. It is also prescribed to reduce neuropathic pain, which is pain coming from an irritated nerve. Examples of irritated nerves include neck or back pain due to pressure on a nerve from a bulging or herniated disc – especially the shooting pains going down arms or legs (sciatica). Gabapentin is also used to relieve the pain of diabetic neuropathy and the pain associated with herpes zoster or “shingles”. Also, gabapentin is helpful at controlling anxiety.

### **How should Gabapentin & Lyrica be taken?**

Gabapentin comes as a capsule, tablet, or liquid. It is usually taken with a full glass of water (8 oz) three times a day and may be taken with or without food. Take this medication at evenly spaced times throughout the day and night; do not let more than 12 hours pass between doses. It may take several weeks before a dose is established that provides relief of pain. Be patient and do not give up prematurely! Your doctor will start you on a low dose of gabapentin and gradually increase your dose as needed to treat your condition. To avoid side effects when you first start gabapentin, take the meds as follows:

- Start with one tablet at night only for 3 nights then
- Add a second tablet in the morning and take twice daily for 3 days then
- Take one tablet 3x/daily

Once you are comfortable taking gabapentin one tablet 3x/day for a week or two, you can gradually work your dosing up to 2 tablets 3x/day for a week or two. Reassess your benefits at this time - if 2 tablets 3x/day offers more benefit than 1, consider increasing your dose to 3 tablets 3x/day for possible further benefit. The maximum dose is 1200mg 3x/day. If you encounter side effects as you increase your doses, drop your dose down to the lower dose that did not give side effects. Do not increase your dose if you are already experiencing side effects at your current dose. The goal is to identify the dose that gives you the maximum benefits with no side effects.

If your doctor tells you to take one-half of a tablet as part of your dose, carefully split the tablet along the score mark. Use the other half-tablet as part of your next dose. Properly throw away any half-tablets that you have not used within several days of breaking them.

Do not suddenly stop taking gabapentin - if you suddenly stop taking gabapentin after being on it for a while, you may experience withdrawal symptoms such as anxiety, difficulty sleeping, nausea, and sweating - however, withdrawal symptoms are very uncommon. To avoid these withdrawal symptoms when you discontinue gabapentin, you should decrease your dose gradually over about a week (unless the problem is an allergic reaction to gabapentin, then immediately stop it).

### **What should I do if I forget a dose?**

Take the missed dose as soon as you remember it. However, if it is almost time for the next dose, skip the missed dose and continue your regular dosing schedule. Do not take a double dose to make up for a missed one.

### **What special precautions should I follow?**

- \* tell your doctor and pharmacist if you are allergic to gabapentin or any of the inactive ingredients in the gabapentin. Ask your pharmacist for a list of the inactive ingredients.
- \* tell your doctor and pharmacist what prescription and nonprescription medications, vitamins, nutritional supplements, and herbal products you are taking or plan to take.
- \* if you are taking antacids such as Maalox or Mylanta, take them at least 2 hours before you take gabapentin.
- \* tell your doctor if you have or have ever had seizures or kidney disease.
- \* tell your doctor if you are pregnant, plan to become pregnant, or are breast-feeding.
- \* if you are having surgery, including dental surgery, tell the doctor or dentist that you are taking gabapentin.
- \* gabapentin may make you drowsy or dizzy. Do not drive a car or operate machinery until you know how this



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medication affects you and remember that alcohol, pain medications and sedatives can add to the drowsiness caused by this medication.

Keep this medication in the container it came in, tightly closed, and out of reach of children. Store the tablets and capsules at room temperature, away from excess heat and moisture (not in the bathroom). Store the liquid in the refrigerator. Throw away any medication that is outdated or no longer needed. Talk to your pharmacist about the proper disposal of your medication.

### What side effects can Gabapentin & Lyrica cause?

#### ***Do not be alarmed at the following list!!***

Most of these symptoms are also listed for the other medications you are already taking - including narcotic pain medications, and anxiety medications. In most cases these side effects will be avoided by starting at a low dose and increasing the dose slowly. And even if side effects do occur, they will stop as soon as you reduce the dose of the gabapentin. Statistically, gabapentin is well tolerated by most patients: less than one out of ten patients discontinue gabapentin because of intolerable side effects.

If you do experience persistent side effects as you increase your dose, reduce your dose to the last dose that you tolerated well. After a few days, try increasing the dose again. If you still experience intolerable side effects, return again to the last dose you tolerated well and stay at that dose until you see your doctor again.

*Tell your doctor if any of these symptoms are severe or do not go away:*

#### **Common:**

- \* drowsiness
- \* tiredness or weakness
- \* dizziness or unsteadiness

#### **Unusual:**

- \* headache
- \* shaking of a part of your body that you cannot control
- \* double or blurred vision
- \* anxiety
- \* memory problems
- \* strange or unusual thoughts
- \* unwanted eye movements
- \* heartburn, nausea, diarrhea or constipation
- \* dry mouth
- \* weight gain
- \* swelling of the hands, feet, ankles, or lower legs
- \* rash or itching

Gabapentin may cause other side effects. Notify your doctor if you have any unusual symptoms while taking this medication. Some symptoms may be serious especially when due to an allergic reaction. If you experience any of the following symptoms, call 911 immediately:

- \* swelling of the face, throat, tongue, lips, eyes, or extremities
- \* hoarseness
- \* difficulty swallowing or breathing
- \* seizures (usually only in people taking gabapentin for seizures who suddenly stop the gabapentin)



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In case of overdose, call your local poison control center at 1-800-222-1222. If the victim has collapsed or is not breathing, call local emergency services at 911. Symptoms of overdose may include:

- \* double vision
- \* slurred speech
- \* drowsiness
- \* diarrhea