



EPILEPSY & Medication

Gabapentin (NEURONTIN®)

Used for:

- Partial seizures.
- Tonic clonic (grand mal) seizures following partial seizures.
- Not effective for absence seizures.
- Add-on to current anti-epileptic drug therapy.

Precautions:

- Make sure your doctor knows if you have mixed seizures that include absence seizures.
- Inform your epilepsy doctor if you have kidney disease.
- Tell your doctor of your usual alcohol consumption.
- Inform your doctor immediately if you have any unusual or allergic reactions to gabapentin.
- Refrain from operating machinery or any activities requiring mental alertness or physical coordination until certain that gabapentin not affecting your abilities.

Possible side effects:

Side effects may occur at varying degrees or not at all depending on the individual, including:

- Drowsiness.
- Dizziness.
- Loss of coordination.
- Fatigue.
- Tremor.
- Visual disturbances.
- Nausea and/or vomiting.
- Headache.
- Depression.
- Weight gain.

Allergic Reaction/Idiosyncratic

- Skin rash (if you notice a rash, seek immediate medical help).



Tips For Using Gabapentin (Neurontin®):

- For best effects, take this medication at evenly-spaced intervals.
- Gabapentin may be taken with or without food.
- Most side effects usually resolve within two weeks.
- Avoid alcohol.
- If you need to take an antacid, take it at least two hours before taking gabapentin.
- Blood level monitoring not required.

This material has been reviewed by the Ontario Drug Information and Research Centre and is offered to provide general information to the public. It is not intended to be taken as medical advice. Epilepsy Toronto and its advisors accept no liability. Consult your physician and/or neurologist with any questions you may have.

Drug Interactions:

- Alcohol drinking increases drowsiness.
- Antacids may decrease the effectiveness of gabapentin.
- Gabapentin does not interact with other anti-epileptic drugs like phenytoin, valproic acid, carbamazepine, or phenobarbital.
- Does not affect oral contraceptives.

Inform your doctor and pharmacist of any other medicines (prescription and nonprescription).

Daily Dosage:

Adolescents, Adults - 900 to 3600 mg/day.

Children - 20 to 50 mg/kg/day (not to exceed 1200 mg/day).

Regimen - Taken in three equally divided doses.

Dosage should be individualized. Dosage adjustment may be required in elderly patients whose renal function is declining and in those patients with renal impairment.

Forms:

Capsules – 100, 300 and 400 mg.

Missed Dose:

Try to take each dose at the scheduled time. If you miss a dose, take it as soon as remembered. However, do not take it if it is within 4 hours of the time for the next dose. Instead, skip the missed dose and resume your usual dosing schedule. If you skip a whole day, inform your doctor.

Storage:

Store at room temperature (15 to 30C), protect from light, heat, and moisture, and keep out of reach of children. Do not use capsules that are discoloured.

In Pregnancy:

- Women who are considering pregnancy should first consult their doctor. Potential benefits of using the drug must be weighed against potential risks to fetal health.
- It is not known whether gabapentin appears in breast milk, so caution is advised with breastfeeding.

Warning:

Abrupt withdrawal of any anti-epileptic medication may trigger status epilepticus, a potentially fatal condition of continued seizures without recovery. When there is a need for reduction, discontinuation or substitution of the medication, this should be done gradually and under the physician's care. Never discontinue anti-epileptic medications or make changes in activities unless specifically advised to do so by an attending physician.