

# GABAPENTIN



## Other names

Neurontin

## Drug category

Alpha-2-delta VGCC subunit ligand

## Uses

Gabapentin is used for epilepsy, headaches and neuropathic (nerve-related) pain. It has been tried for oscillopsia and spasticity in multiple sclerosis too.

## Available forms (Schedule 3 controlled drug)

Tablet (600/800 mg), capsule (100/300/400 mg), solution (50 mg/ml)

It can only be prescribed for 30 days maximum

## Some potential side-effects (inform your doctor if you think you have a serious side-effect)

Drowsiness, dizziness, unsteadiness, fatigue, weight gain, nausea, altered bowel habit, withdrawal symptoms, depression, risk of misuse or dependence, tremor, viral infections

## Not to be used if:

Respiratory disease (risk of respiratory depression)

Drinking alcohol or taking opioids (risk of respiratory depression)

Drug abuse (risk of dependence)

Kidney disease (approx. <1800mg daily if eGFR <80ml/min, <900mg if <50ml/min)

## Contraception, pregnancy and breastfeeding

No interaction with hormonal contraception. Should avoid in pregnancy as effect unknown and may increase risk of birth defects. Avoid during breastfeeding (present in milk).

## Interactions with other drugs

Avoid with opioids and alcohol. Antacids reduce gabapentin absorption for 2 hours.

## Monitoring

Monitor for gabapentin abuse (see side-effects above, withdrawal symptoms)

## How to use it

Day	Morning dose	Afternoon dose	Evening dose
Start date	Nil	Nil	300mg
1 week later	300mg	Nil	300mg
2 weeks later	300mg	300mg	300mg
3 weeks later	300mg	300mg	600mg
4 weeks later	600mg	300mg	600mg
5 weeks later	600mg	600mg	600mg
6 weeks later	Continue same dose		

If 600mg three times daily does not help and you have no side-effects, then it can be increased to a higher dose, and this can be done by adding 300mg every 2 weeks but the maximum dose should be no more than 3600mg in a day (1200mg three times a day). If reducing it, do this in steps of 300mg every week until stopped.

Stop and seek medical attention if breathing difficulties or a rash occur on using the drug.

**This information is for guidance only. Always read the medicine information leaflet with any new medicine for full details.**