

Gabapentin

(Ga – ba – pen – tin)

How this medication is used

Gabapentin has other names, one of the most common is Neurontin[®]. It is used to treat chronic pain, especially certain types of nerve pain that feels sharp, and burning (neuropathic pain). It is also used to treat seizures and hot flashes.

Reminders

Do not stop this medication without talking to your doctor first. Sudden stopping of this medication may cause seizures. When it is time to stop taking this medication your doctor may slowly decrease the amount you take.

Tell your doctor if you are taking: morphine, naproxen, other anti-convulsants or any sedating medications.

How to take this medication

- Take this medication exactly as directed by your doctor. It must be taken regularly, even if you feel well.
- You may not have pain relief when you first start taking Gabapentin. Do not give up. It may take up to 6 weeks to start noticing an effect. Continue with it until you meet with the doctor. Talk with your pharmacist if you have any questions about taking Gabapentin.
- Take this medication with food if it upsets your stomach. Antacids containing aluminum or magnesium may interfere with the absorption of this medication. Therefore, if you are also taking an antacid, it is best to take gabapentin at least 2 hours before or after taking the antacid.
- If you miss a dose of this medication, take it as soon as possible. However, if it is almost time for the next dose, skip the missed dose and take at regular time. Do not take 2 doses at one time.

While taking this medication you may notice

- **A dry mouth.** Suck on ice chips, sugar-free candy or chew sugar-free gum. Good care of your teeth is very important at this time.
- **Dizziness.** Get up slowly when you have been sitting or lying down. If you feel dizzy, sit or lie down until you are no longer dizzy, then get up slowly.
- **Drowsiness.** Until you know how it affects you, do not drive or operate machinery.
- **Increased effects of alcohol.** Making you more sleepy, dizzy and lightheaded. Do not drink alcohol (wine, beer and liquor) while on this medication.
- **Constipation.** To prevent constipation, eat food high in fibre, drink plenty of fluids (6 to 8 glasses) each day and exercise regularly. Food high in fibre includes whole grain products, vegetables and fruit. Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about laxatives or stool softeners.
- **Visual disturbances** such as blurred or double vision and unusual movement of the eyeball.
- **Nausea** or upset stomach. Take with food.
- **Loss of strength.**
- **Weight gain.** Follow a healthy diet and exercise plan. Talk to your doctor or dietitian for help.
- **Swelling** of hands or feet.

Contact your doctor or seek medical help if you notice

- change in coordination – clumsy and awkward movements such as staggering when walking
- mood or mental changes unusual for you
- forgetfulness which is unusual for you
- fatigue or feeling very tired
- shaking
- changes in eyesight
- vertigo – a feeling that you are dizzily turning around or that things are dizzily turning around you
- a severe or unusual allergic reaction
- a fever greater than 38°C or 100°F
- a sore throat that does not go away