

GABAPENTIN

Other names: Arrow-Gabapentin®, Neurontin®, Nupentin®



Important note: The following information is intended to add to, not replace, the knowledge and judgment of your doctor, pharmacist or other health care professional.

Why you are taking this medicine

Gabapentin belongs to a group of medicines called anticonvulsants or anti-epileptics. Epilepsy is a chronic condition which occurs when there are abnormal discharges from the brain. Gabapentin is thought to work by increasing a chemical in the brain which controls or decreases signals to nerves and thus preventing these abnormal discharges.

Gabapentin can also be used in neuropathic pain, a type of pain caused by damage to the nerves.

Gabapentin can be used for the following conditions:

- to prevent convulsions (fits) suffered by epileptics
- to treat neuropathic pain

When to take this medicine

Take gabapentin with half a glass of water, swallowed whole. It can be taken before, during or after meals.

Try to take gabapentin at the same time each day to avoid missing any doses.

DO NOT STOP taking this medicine without your doctor's permission. If the intention is to stop this medicine, then your gabapentin dose will need to be reduced over a number of weeks before stopping.

If you miss a dose

If you miss a dose of this medicine take it as soon as possible except when it is close to the time for your next dose. If it is almost time for the next dose, skip the missed dose and return to your regular dosing schedule. You should not take two doses at the same time.

Side Effects

Unfortunately as well as having good effects, most medicines have some effects on your body that are unwanted. These are called *side effects*.

Call your doctor **immediately** if you have any of these side effects:

- persistent stomach pain with sickness
- if you experience jaundice (yellowing of the skin and whites of eyes), fever, loss of appetite and dark urine
- skin rash, severe itching or hives
- shortness of breath, wheezing or difficulty breathing
- swelling of the face, lips, tongue or other parts of the body
- confusion, forgetfulness, loss of concentration
- Unsteady on your feet
- Any change in vision

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you have these side effects:

- dizziness or tiredness, sleepiness
- headache
- feeling or being sick, indigestion, abdominal discomfort, diarrhoea or constipation
- dry mouth, red swollen gums or mouth ulcers
- mood changes - unfriendliness or distressing thoughts
- muscle pain or cramps, back pain
- sore throat and discomfort when swallowing, coughing
- runny or blocked nose

Gabapentin can make some people drowsy or lightheaded. It is important to make sure you know how your body reacts before you drive a car, use machinery or ride a bike.

The list of side effects is **not** complete. Tell your doctor or pharmacist if any of these side effects are of concern to you.

Other Medication

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking any other medicine including herbal or complementary products and medicines you can buy without a prescription.

Do not take any antacid preparations (e.g. Mylanta) at the same time as gabapentin as antacids interfere with the absorption of gabapentin. If you do need to take an antacid for indigestion, leave at least two hours after taking your gabapentin before you take the antacid.

Be very careful if taking alcohol with gabapentin as the two together can make you sleepy, dizzy or lightheaded.

Storage

Keep all medicines out of reach of children.

Read this leaflet and discuss any questions you have about your medicines with your doctor or pharmacist.