

Gabapentin



Pain Service

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www.bcchildrens.ca

Gabapentin also called:

- ▶ Neurontin®
- ▶ Novo-Gabapentin®
- ▶ or other names.

What is Gabapentin?

This medication was first made to help control some types of epileptic seizures. Gabapentin has since been found to be effective for some types of pain, including headache pain, nerve pain and pain after surgery. The way that gabapentin works to reduce or prevent pain is not known. Gabapentin may be used alone or in combination with other medications.

Take this medication regularly to prevent or reduce the pain that you experience. It may take several weeks before you start to feel better.

How to use and store this medication:

- ▶ You may take this medication with or without food. Take the medication with food if you find it is upsetting to your stomach.
- ▶ Store the medication at room temperature away from heat, moisture and direct light
- ▶ Store the medication out of reach of children

If you miss a dose:

- ▶ If you miss a dose or forget to take your medication, take it as soon as you remember. However, if it is almost time for your next dose, do not take the missed dose or double your next dose. Instead, continue your regular dosing schedule. If you are unsure what to do about a missed dose, contact your doctor or pharmacist.
- ▶ Do **not** take extra medication to make up for a missed dose

Drugs and food to avoid:

- ▶ Ask your doctor or pharmacist before using any other medication, including non-prescription medications, vitamins and herbal products
- ▶ If you take an antacid, take it at least 2 hours before or after taking gabapentin

Warnings:

- ▶ Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or breastfeeding, or if you have kidney disease
- ▶ Do **not** stop taking this medication suddenly without asking your doctor – this medication is usually decreased slowly before it is stopped completely
- ▶ Gabapentin can make you dizzy or drowsy, especially when first starting the medication. **Do not** drive, use machines or do anything else that could be dangerous if you are not alert

Side effects:

This list of side effects is important for you to be aware of; however, it is also important to remember that not all side effects happen to all people. In fact, with this medication most people have very few side effects.

These are some less serious side effects of taking gabapentin. Most of these less serious side effects will improve over the first few days of taking the medication. If you have problems with these less serious side effects, talk with your doctor or pharmacist:

- ▶ Behaviour changes such as irritability, restlessness, trouble concentrating, or moodiness.

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Side Effects

This list of side effects is important for you to know. Remember that not all side effects happen to all people, and most side effects will go away in a few days as your child's body gets used to the medicine. Other side effects are more serious and your child will need to be seen by a doctor right away. Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you think your child has any side effects caused by this medicine.

The following are less serious side effects that will usually go away in a few days. If they go away, you do not need to take your child to the doctor. If they do not go away after a few days, take your child to the doctor right away.

- Feeling sick to her or his stomach or throwing up
- Heartburn
- Bowel movements that are very hard (constipation)
- Bowel movements that are watery (diarrhea)
- Feeling itchy
- Feeling dizzy
- Feeling more sleepy
- Finding it hard to go to sleep or stay asleep
- Headache
- Feeling nervous
- Feeling upset
- Muscles feel tight
- Changes in mood
- Dry mouth

When should I call the doctor about side effects?

- If the less serious side effects do not go away in a few days.
- If your child has any of the following:
 - flu-like symptoms
 - rash
 - change in the sound of her or his voice (for example, the voice sounds hoarse).
 - is seeing, hearing, feeling or smelling things that are not there. This is also called having hallucinations.



When should I call 911?

If your child has any of the following:

- a seizure or convulsion
- a hard time breathing
- chest pain or feels her or his heart is beating funny or has a fast heartbeat
- swelling of the face, throat, tongue, lips, eyes, hands, feet, ankles, or lower legs

Always tell your doctor or pharmacist if you think your child has had any side effects from this medicine.



If you have questions about pain management in children, call:

- BCCH Pain Service at 604-875-2345 ext 5108 or
- Call for free if you live in BC at 1-888-3088 extension (5108).

It's good to ask.

Developed by the health care professionals of the BCCH Pain Service with assistance from the Department of Learning & Development