

# Neurontin® (Gabapentin)

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## **What is Neurontin® (Gabapentin)?**

Neurontin® is an anti-epileptic drug that is used to treat patients with Partial Onset Seizures.

## **Starting the Medicine:**

We usually gradually increase the dose, until your body gets adjusted to the medication. Since each patient is unique in that he/she breaks down the medication differently or may need a higher or lower dosage to control their seizures, there is no standard dose that is appropriate for all patients.

## **What is the dosage of the pill and what does it look like?**

It comes as a white 100mg capsule, a yellow 300mg capsule, or a tan 400mg capsule.

## **What Side Effects Can Be Caused by Neurontin®?**

Side Effects can be dose related (common) or Idiosyncratic (rare):

### **Common Dose-Related Side Effects:**

Drowsiness, dizziness, fatigue, double vision, tremor, and unsteadiness when walking. These side effects are most frequent at the start of treatment, and they are temporary and usually go away as your body gets adjusted to the medicine.

If you have these side effects, your doctor may:

- spread out the dose evenly throughout the day in four divided doses

- decrease the daily dose, and increase the bedtime dose
- instruct you to take your pill with food since this will slow the rate at which the medicine gets into the blood, but will not affect the total amount that is absorbed.

### **Rare Side Effects:**

Very rarely, Neurontin® can reduce the body's ability to manufacture certain blood cells which are important to fight infections and prevent bleeding. A reduction in these cells can cause fever, sore throat and ulcers in the mouth, or unusual bleeding and easy bruising. If these symptoms occur, contact your doctor immediately.

Occasionally, Neurontin® can cause fluid retention (edema) in the legs.

### **Skin Rash:**

An allergic rash can occur with Neurontin®, although this is less common than with many other seizure medicines. It tends to occur during the first six weeks of therapy. If this occurs, contact your doctor immediately.

### **Pregnancy:**

Women of child-bearing age should be aware that Neurontin® has been shown to cause damage to the developing fetus in rats (bone development problems and kidney and ureter problems). Neurontin® was also shown to be associated with increased incidence of miscarriage in rabbits. There are no adequate controlled studies in pregnancy in humans. Any woman taking Neurontin should discuss these issues with her doctor BEFORE becoming pregnant.

### **How Do I Take This Medication?**

It is very important to take your medication regularly since a stable blood level helps to reduce seizures. Therefore, the medication does not work when taken

on an “as needed” basis. It is usually prescribed in three evenly-divided doses taken at regular times.

### **Can I Take Neurontin® with Other Medications?**

Yes, Neurontin® may be taken with most medications. It is not significantly metabolized in the liver, and does not interfere with the metabolism of other commonly administered seizure medicines or birth control pills. Certain medicines (such as stomach medicines) may alter the effectiveness of Neurontin. Always tell your doctor what other medicines you are taking.

### **What Should I Do If I Miss a Dose?**

If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember. You may have to change your usual times taking Neurontin when you are trying to make up the missing dose. If you have to “double up” on a dose, take that dose at bedtime.

### **Do I need to have My Blood Checked for Neurontin®?**

Neurontin® blood levels generally do not have to be monitored as they are with many other seizure medicines. However, your Doctor may occasionally check the level under certain circumstances. Blood cell counts and liver enzyme levels are not routinely monitored with Neurontin.

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