

# Gabapentin

## Pain Management Patient Information Leaflet

### Introduction

Welcome to The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust pain management service. This leaflet will provide you and your relatives with information about a medication called gabapentin. It includes what it is for, how it is taken and its benefits and risks.

This leaflet is not meant to replace discussion between you and your doctor, but as a guide to be used in conjunction with what is discussed.

### What is gabapentin?

It is a medicine used to treat some types of persistent pain, especially pain from damaged or sensitive nerves.

Gabapentin helps a lot of people with this kind of pain but not everyone. Some people feel no benefit from taking it and others may have side effects that make it difficult to use the medicine.

Gabapentin was developed to treat epilepsy, and is called an antiepileptic. It was then discovered that it works on pain nerves as well as the nerves in the brain that cause epilepsy.

### Why am I having gabapentin?

You are being prescribed gabapentin to treat your pain, not for epilepsy.

## What are the benefits?

It can help relieve persistent pain when common painkillers have not been effective.

## What are the risks?

Gabapentin can cause side effects. The most common problem is feeling sleepy which may improve as you get used to the medicine. Some people have stomach pain and sickness. Rare problems are described in the leaflet that comes with your tablets.

**Important: do not drive or operate heavy machinery if you feel drowsy.**

If you have unpleasant side effects from the medication, you can stop taking the tablets. If you are taking more than three tablets a day, we suggest that you stop the tablets gradually. To do this, take half of your usual dose for three or four days, then take one tablet morning and night for a further three or four days, then stop.

If you have severe side effects, stop taking gabapentin straight away and inform your GP as soon as you can. If you have mild side effects but an improvement in your pain, you may wish to continue the medication without increasing the dose.

## How do I take it?

It is important to build up the dose gradually, to help prevent problems. You have to take the medicine every day. It is not like an ordinary painkiller, and does not work very well if you only take it when the pain is bad.

You should keep taking the medicine unless you have bad side effects. If you do have side effects, try reducing the dose by one tablet for one to two weeks, and then increasing the dose again. Once you have reached the full dose, try to stay on it. Most patients feel some benefit at about four capsules a day (1,200mg).

We suggest that you build up the dose like this:

<b>Week</b>	<b>Breakfast time dose</b>	<b>Lunch time dose</b>	<b>Bedtime dose</b>
<b>1</b>			300mg
<b>2</b>	300mg		300mg
<b>3</b>	300mg	300mg	300mg
<b>4</b>	300mg	300mg	600mg
<b>5</b>	600mg	300mg	600mg
<b>6</b>	600mg	600mg	600mg

300mg is one capsule, 600mg is one tablet

Some patients prefer to take one 600 mg tablet three times a day rather than two capsules. When you need more tablets, you will need to get them from your GP.

## **What if I have problems?**

You can contact the clinical nurse specialists in the pain management team (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday) by:

- Calling **01384 244735** and leaving a message on the answerphone or
- Ringing the switchboard number 01384 456111 and asking them to bleep the number 5064

Out of these hours, you will need to contact your GP or NHS 111.

## **Can I find out more?**

The following website has more information about managing pain:

### **British Pain Society**

<https://www.britishpainsociety.org/british-pain-society-publications/patient-publications/>

The following website has information about medications and driving:

[www.gov.uk/drug-driving-law](http://www.gov.uk/drug-driving-law)

Russells Hall Hospital switchboard number: 01384 456111

**This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:**

<http://dgft.nhs.uk/services-and-wards/pain-management/>

If you have any feedback on this patient information leaflet, please email [dgft.patient.information@nhs.net](mailto:dgft.patient.information@nhs.net)

**This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 073 0510.**

للحصول على هذه النشرة بحجم أكبر، وعلى شكل إصدار صوتي و بلغات أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال بالرقم 08000730510.

此宣传单可提供大字版本、音频版本和其它语言版本，请拨打电话：0800 073 0510。

Ulotka dostępna jest również w dużym druku, wersji audio lub w innym języku. W tym celu zadzwoń pod numer 0800 073 0510.

ਇਹ ਪਰਚਾ ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ, ਬੋਲ ਕੇ ਰੀਕਾਰਡ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਅਤੇ ਦੂਸਰੀਆਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ, 0800 073 0510 ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜੀ।

Aceasta broșura poate fi pusă la dispoziție tipărită cu caractere mari, versiune audio sau în alte limbi, pentru acest lucru va rugăm sunați la 0800 073 0510.

یہ کتابچہ آپ کو بڑے حروف کی لکھائی، سمعی صورت اور دیگر زبانوں میں مہیا کیا جا سکتا ہے۔ برائے مہربانی فون نمبر 08000730510 پر رابطہ کریں۔