

GABAPENTIN

DRUG NAME

Generic: Gabapentin

Class of drug: Gabapentinoid

Brands in Australia: Gapentin, Gabapentin, Neurontin, Gabacor, Nupentin (other generic brands available)

DOSAGE FORM

Available as a 100 mg capsule, 300 mg capsule, 400 mg capsule, 600 mg tablet and 800 mg tablet. Quantity 100.

HOW IT WORKS

Gabapentinoids attach to calcium channels on nerve cells. By doing this, they reduce the “firing” of overactive pain nerves. This makes burning, tingling, or shooting pains less intense. Pregabalin is a newer version and can be a bit more predictable in effect.

Used in pain management, especially for chronic or neuropathic pain, as directed by your doctor. It is first line for peripheral nerve pain, sensitisation such as in burns, fibromyalgia, and cancer pain. It has been used for spasticity, restless leg syndrome, itch, sweating in cancer or menopause, hiccups.

Onset of action

- Some pain relief may be noticed within **1–2 weeks**.
- Maximum benefit may take **4–8 weeks** at the right dose.
- Titration is important to balance effect and side effects

DOSAGE & FREQUENCY

Your doctor will advise on the starting dose and guide the dose changes.

- start with _____
- if tolerated, increase to _____ after _____ days
- if necessary, increase by _____ every _____ week(s)
- if successive increases are well tolerated *and bring additional benefit*, continue to titrate up to a maximum of _____
- to be reviewed by your doctor on _____

Often titrated slowly to minimise side effects. Dose is gradually increased every few days depending on response and tolerance.

ROUTE OF ADMINISTRATION

Oral (by mouth) unless otherwise specified.

WHAT ELSE SHOULD I KNOW WHILE TAKING THIS MEDICATION

- This medicine may cause drowsiness or dizziness; if affected, do not drive or operate machinery. This may improve after a few days or a week with a dose adjustment.

- Avoid alcohol or other medications that may cause you to feel sleepy while taking this medicine.
- Do not stop taking this medicine suddenly unless your doctor tells you to.
- May be taken with or without food.

STORAGE INSTRUCTIONS

Store at room temperature, below 25°C, away from moisture and sunlight. Keep out of reach of children.

DISPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS

Return unused or expired medication to your pharmacy for safe disposal.

MISSED DOSE INSTRUCTIONS

Ask your doctor or pharmacist.

EMERGENCY INSTRUCTIONS

Seek urgent medical help if you:

- Take too much (overdose may cause severe drowsiness, confusion, blurred vision, or seizures).
- Develop severe allergic reaction (rash, swelling, breathing difficulties).

COMMON SIDE EFFECTS

- Drowsiness, dizziness
- Tiredness
- Weight gain
- Blurred vision
- Unsteadiness or poor coordination
- Nausea

SERIOUS SIDE EFFECTS

Seek immediate medical attention with the following:

- absence seizures (worsen)
- precipitate or exacerbate psychotic episodes
- elevated risk of misuse or abuse
- severe mood changes, depression and suicidal thoughts
- breathing difficulties when combined with opioid painkillers
- severe dizziness or unsteadiness leading to falls

MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR SIDE EFFECTS

- Drowsiness/dizziness: Take at night, avoid driving until you know its effect.
- Weight gain: Monitor diet and exercise.
- Nausea: Take with food.
- Unsteadiness: Stand up slowly, use handrails, and take fall precautions.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Interactions:

- Increased risk of drowsiness when combined with opioids, alcohol, or other sedatives.

Precautions:

- Dose adjustment is required in kidney disease.
- Not usually recommended in pregnancy unless clearly needed.

- Not to be stopped suddenly — taper under medical supervision, as withdrawal symptoms may occur (e.g. anxiety, insomnia, sweating, nausea, diarrhoea)

Can cause a false positive reading for urinary protein.

Elective surgery advice

- Usually **continued before surgery**, as stopping suddenly may increase risk of seizures or withdrawal.
- Can increase drowsiness when combined with anaesthetics or opioid pain medicines.
- Inform your surgeon and anaesthetist you are taking it.

TITRATION DIARY

Date	Dose Taken	Side Effects	Notes (e.g., sleep, pain relief)