

Spasticity Service

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King's College Hospital
NHS Foundation Trust

Gabapentin titration patient information leaflet

Patient name :	Date :
Hospital no :	Doctor :

Gabapentin is a drug used to treat epilepsy and neuropathic pain. It also has some effect on spasticity and can be used in combination with other drugs as an off-label use; it is particularly useful if pain and spasticity co-exist. The maximum dose is **3600 mg per day in divided doses**.

It is available as:

Tablets	600mg or 800mg
Capsules	100mg or 300mg or 400mg
Oral solution	50 mg/ml or 250mg/5ml

As with most medications, a range of side-effects have been reported with gabapentin. For a full list of side effects, please refer to the product information leaflet included with the medication.

The more common ones include:

- Drowsiness/vertigo
- Nausea / vomiting
- Dry mouth
- Dizziness
- Headache
- Leucopenia
- Infections such as viral, urinary tract, respiratory
- Confusion, anxiety, nervousness, abnormal thinking
- Anorexia or increased appetite

Not everyone will experience these side effects and many individuals do not experience any problems.

Additional information:

- Gabapentin may cause dizziness, drowsiness and decreased concentration, you should not drive or operate machinery if this affects you.
- Some patients have experienced breathing difficulties when taking gabapentin – certain people may need a lower dose to reduce the risks of these issues. Contact your doctor if you notice new or increased trouble breathing or you experience shallow breathing after taking gabapentin; a noticeable change in breathing might be associated with sleepiness.
- The risk of some of these side effects such as drowsiness or difficulty breathing may be higher in people taking opioids such as codeine, methadone or morphine, your doctor should review these medicines before you start gabapentin.
- Effects of alcohol may be enhanced and sedation may be increased with concomitant gabapentin use. Avoid drinking alcohol during gabapentin treatment.
- There is a risk of abuse or dependence with this medication, talk to your doctor if you have any concerns.

Do not stop taking gabapentin except on your doctor's advice. It is usually weaned over at least 1 week.

Gabapentin should be taken in a step-wise increasing dose, please follow the table below.

Week 1				
Week 2				
Week 3				
Week 4				
Week 5				
Week 6				

Some individuals are able to follow the increasing dosage regimen without any problems. However, if you experience side effects when you increase the dose, then reduce back down to a dose where you did not have or experience significant side effects. You should allow your body to develop tolerance at the smaller dose for a few weeks before considering to up-titrate.

Please note that if at any stage of the increasing dosage regimen you achieve satisfactory symptom control, then there is no need to further increase the dose.

If you need to stop gabapentin, then follow the stepwise pattern in reverse to gradually decrease the dose each week or discuss with your doctor or spasticity team.

This leaflet mainly focuses on how to titrate gabapentin. For further information on gabapentin, please refer to the full patient information leaflet, which is included in every medicine package.

If you have any queries, please contact the Spasticity CNS or Medical Secretary on the front page telephone number.

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is a service that offers support, information and assistance to patients, relatives and visitors. They can also provide help and advice if you have a concern or complaint that staff have not been able to resolve for you. They can also pass on praise or thanks to our teams. The PALS office is in the main hospital foyer at PRUH and they would be happy to advise you.

PALS at Princess Royal University Hospital, Farnborough Common, Orpington, Kent BR6 8ND

Tel: **01689 863252**

Email: **kch-tr.palspruh@nhs.net**

If you would like the information in this leaflet in a different language or format, please contact our Communications and Interpreting telephone line on 020 3299 4826 or email:

kch-tr.accessibility@nhs.net

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