PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Gabapentin

This information from Lexicomp® explains what you need to know about this medication, including what it’s used for, how to take it, its side effects, and when to call your healthcare provider.

**Brand Names: US**
Gralise; Gralise Starter; Neurontin

**Brand Names: Canada**
ACT Gabapentin [DSC]; AG-Gabapentin; APO-Gabapentin; Auro-Gabapentin; BCI Gabapentin [DSC]; BIO-Gabapentin; DOM-Gabapentin; GD-Gabapentin; GLN-Gabapentin; JAMP-Gabapentin; Mar-Gabapentin; MYLAN-Gabapentin [DSC]; Neurontin; PMS-Gabapentin; Priva-Gabapentin; PRO-Gabapentin; RAN-Gabapentin; RIVA-Gabapentin; TARO-Gabapentin; TEVA-Gabapentin; VAN-Gabapentin [DSC]

**What is this drug used for?**

- It is used to treat seizures.
- It is used to treat painful nerve diseases.
- It may be given to you for other reasons. Talk with the doctor.

**What do I need to tell my doctor BEFORE I take this drug?**

- If you are allergic to this drug; any part of this drug; or any other drugs, foods, or substances. Tell your doctor about the allergy and what signs you had.
- If you have kidney disease or are on dialysis.

This is not a list of all drugs or health problems that interact with this drug.
Tell your doctor and pharmacist about all of your drugs (prescription or OTC, natural products, vitamins) and health problems. You must check to make sure that it is safe for you to take this drug with all of your drugs and health problems. Do not start, stop, or change the dose of any drug without checking with your doctor.

What are some things I need to know or do while I take this drug?

- Tell all of your health care providers that you take this drug. This includes your doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- Avoid driving and doing other tasks or actions that call for you to be alert until you see how this drug affects you.
- This drug may affect certain lab tests. Tell all of your health care providers and lab workers that you take this drug.
- Have blood work checked as you have been told by the doctor. Talk with the doctor.
- Talk with your doctor before you drink alcohol or use other drugs and natural products that slow your actions.
- This drug is not the same as gabapentin enacarbil (Horizant™). Do not use in its place. Talk with the doctor.
- Do not stop taking this drug all of a sudden without calling your doctor. You may have a greater risk of side effects. If you need to stop this drug, you will want to slowly stop it as ordered by your doctor.
- A severe and sometimes deadly reaction has happened. Most of the time, this reaction has signs like fever, rash, or swollen glands with problems in body organs like the liver, kidney, blood, heart, muscles and joints, or lungs. If you have questions, talk with the doctor.
- Severe breathing problems have happened. Sometimes, this has been deadly. The risk may be greater in people taking certain drugs like opioid pain drugs or those with certain health problems like chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). The risk may also be greater in people who are older than 65. If you have questions, talk with the doctor.
- If you are 65 or older, use this drug with care. You could have more side
effects.

- Use with care in children. Talk with the doctor.
- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant, plan on getting pregnant, or are breast-feeding. You will need to talk about the benefits and risks to you and the baby.

What are some side effects that I need to call my doctor about right away?

**WARNING/CAUTION:** Even though it may be rare, some people may have very bad and sometimes deadly side effects when taking a drug. Tell your doctor or get medical help right away if you have any of the following signs or symptoms that may be related to a very bad side effect:

- Signs of an allergic reaction, like rash; hives; itching; red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin with or without fever; wheezing; tightness in the chest or throat; trouble breathing, swallowing, or talking; unusual hoarseness; or swelling of the mouth, face, lips, tongue, or throat.
- Signs of liver problems like dark urine, feeling tired, not hungry, upset stomach or stomach pain, light-colored stools, throwing up, or yellow skin or eyes.
- Signs of kidney problems like unable to pass urine, change in how much urine is passed, blood in the urine, or a big weight gain.
- Trouble controlling body movements, twitching, change in balance, trouble swallowing or speaking.
- Memory problems or loss.
- Change in eyesight.
- Feeling confused, not able to focus, or change in behavior.
- Shakiness.
- Trouble breathing, slow breathing, or shallow breathing.
- Change in color of skin to a bluish color like on the lips, nail beds, fingers, or toes.
- Shortness of breath, a big weight gain, or swelling in the arms or legs.
- Not able to control eye movements.
- If seizures are worse or not the same after starting this drug.
- Swollen gland.
- Fever, chills, or sore throat; any unexplained bruising or bleeding; or feeling very tired or weak.
- Muscle pain or weakness.
- Get medical help right away if you feel very sleepy, very dizzy, or if you pass out. Caregivers or others need to get medical help right away if the patient does not respond, does not answer or react like normal, or will not wake up.
- Patients who take this drug may be at a greater risk of having thoughts or actions of suicide. The risk may be greater in people who have had these thoughts or actions in the past. Call the doctor right away if signs like low mood (depression), nervousness, restlessness, grouchiness, panic attacks, or changes in mood or actions are new or worse. Call the doctor right away if any thoughts or actions of suicide occur.

What are some other side effects of this drug?

All drugs may cause side effects. However, many people have no side effects or only have minor side effects. Call your doctor or get medical help if any of these side effects or any other side effects bother you or do not go away:

- Feeling dizzy, sleepy, tired, or weak.
- Upset stomach or throwing up.
- Diarrhea.
- Dry mouth.

These are not all of the side effects that may occur. If you have questions about side effects, call your doctor. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects.

You may report side effects to your national health agency.

You may report side effects to the FDA at 1-800-332-1088. You may also report side effects at https://www.fda.gov/medwatch.
**How is this drug best taken?**

Use this drug as ordered by your doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

**All products:**

- Keep taking this drug as you have been told by your doctor or other health care provider, even if you feel well.
- If you are taking an antacid that has aluminum or magnesium in it, take this drug at least 2 hours after taking the antacid.

**Gralise:**

- Take with the evening meal.
- Swallow whole. Do not chew, break, or crush.

**All other products:**

- Take with or without food. Take with food if it causes an upset stomach.

**Capsules:**

- Swallow whole with a full glass of water.

**Tablets:**

- You may break the tablet in half. Do not chew or crush.
- If you break the tablet in half, use the other half of the tablet for the next dose, as told by the doctor. Throw away half-tablets not used within 28 days.

**Liquid (solution):**

- Measure liquid doses carefully. Use the measuring device that comes with this drug. If there is none, ask the pharmacist for a device to measure this drug.

**What do I do if I miss a dose?**

- Take a missed dose as soon as you think about it.
If it is close to the time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your normal time.

Do not take 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.

How do I store and/or throw out this drug?

Liquid (solution):

- Store in a refrigerator. Do not freeze.

All other products:

- Store at room temperature in a dry place. Do not store in a bathroom.

All dose forms:

- Keep all drugs in a safe place. Keep all drugs out of the reach of children and pets.

- Throw away unused or expired drugs. Do not flush down a toilet or pour down a drain unless you are told to do so. Check with your pharmacist if you have questions about the best way to throw out drugs. There may be drug take-back programs in your area.

General drug facts

- If your symptoms or health problems do not get better or if they become worse, call your doctor.

- Do not share your drugs with others and do not take anyone else’s drugs.

- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.

- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. Check with your pharmacist. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.

- If you think there has been an overdose, call your poison control center or get medical care right away. Be ready to tell or show what was taken, how much, and when it happened.
Consumer Information Use and Disclaimer

This information should not be used to decide whether or not to take this medicine or any other medicine. Only the healthcare provider has the knowledge and training to decide which medicines are right for a specific patient. This information does not endorse any medicine as safe, effective, or approved for treating any patient or health condition. This is only a brief summary of general information about this medicine. It does NOT include all information about the possible uses, directions, warnings, precautions, interactions, adverse effects, or risks that may apply to this medicine. This information is not specific medical advice and does not replace information you receive from the healthcare provider. You must talk with the healthcare provider for complete information about the risks and benefits of using this medicine.

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If you have any questions, contact a member of your healthcare team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5:00 PM, during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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