PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Gabapentin

This information from UpToDate® Lexidrug™ 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

Gabarone; Gralise; Neurontin; Relgaabi

Brand Names: Canada

ACH-Gabapentin; AG-Gabapentin; APO-Gabapentin; Auro-Gabapentin; DOM-Gabapentin [DSC]; GLN-Gabapentin; JAMP Gabapentin; JAMP-Gabapentin; Mar-Gabapentin [DSC]; MINT-Gabapentin; Neurontin; NRA-Gabapentin; PMS-Gabapentin; PRO-Gabapentin; RAN-Gabapentin [DSC]; RIVA-Gabapentin; TARO-Gabapentin [DSC]; TEVA-Gabapentin

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat painful nerve diseases.
- It is used to help control certain kinds of seizures.
- 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?

For all uses of 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 your blood work and other lab tests checked as you have been told by your doctor.
- Talk with your doctor before you use alcohol, marijuana or other forms of cannabis, or prescription or OTC drugs that may 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. You may have a risk of side effects, including upset stomach, diarrhea, headache, trouble sleeping, anxiety, depression, thoughts of suicide, and others. Seizures may also happen more often in patients who were taking this drug for seizures. If you need to stop this drug, talk first with your doctor. You will need to slowly stop it as ordered by your doctor.
- Severe breathing problems have happened with this drug in people taking certain other drugs (like opioid pain drugs). This has also happened in people who already have lung or breathing problems. The risk may also be greater in people who are older than 65. Sometimes, breathing problems have been deadly. 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.
- If the patient is 3 to 12 years of age, use this drug with care. The risk of mood or behavior problems may be higher in these children.
- 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.

For seizures:

- If seizures are different or worse after starting this drug, talk with the doctor.

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.

- Trouble controlling body movements, twitching, change in balance, trouble swallowing or speaking.
- Memory problems or loss.
- Change in eyesight.
- Not able to control eye movements.
- Feeling confused, not able to focus, or change in behavior.
- Shakiness.
- Trouble breathing, slow breathing, or shallow breathing.
- Blue or gray color of the skin, lips, nail beds, fingers, or toes.
- Swelling in the arms or legs.
- Fever, chills, or sore throat.
- Severe dizziness or passing out.
- 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.
- Like other drugs that may be used for seizures, this drug may rarely raise the risk of suicidal thoughts or actions. This has also been reported even after the drug was

stopped. The risk may be higher in people who have had suicidal thoughts or actions in the past. Call the doctor right away about any new or worse signs like depression; feeling nervous, restless, or grouchy; panic attacks; or other changes in mood or behavior. Call the doctor right away if any suicidal thoughts or actions occur.

- Severe skin reactions may happen with this drug. Sometimes, body organs may also be affected. These reactions can be deadly. Get medical help right away if you have signs like red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin; red or irritated eyes; sores in your mouth, throat, nose, eyes, genitals, or any areas of skin; fever, chills, or sore throat; body aches; shortness of breath; muscle pain or weakness; any unexplained bruising or bleeding; feeling very tired or weak; dark urine or yellow skin or eyes; trouble passing urine; or swollen glands.

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.
- Diarrhea, upset stomach, or throwing up.
- 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.

Capsules:

- Swallow whole with a full glass of water.

Tablets:

- Some products may be broken in half. If you are not sure if you can break this product in half, talk with the doctor.
- 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 generalized information is a limited summary of diagnosis, treatment, and/or medication information. It is not meant to be comprehensive and should be used as a tool to help the user understand and/or assess potential diagnostic and treatment options. It does NOT include all information about conditions, treatments, medications, side effects, or risks that may apply to a specific patient. It is not intended to be medical advice or a substitute for the medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment of a health care provider based on the health care provider's examination and assessment of a patient's specific and unique circumstances. Patients must speak with a health care provider for complete information about their health, medical questions, and treatment options, including any risks or benefits regarding use of medications. This

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If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

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

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