

**HIVInfo.us** presents

**An HIV Information Site & HIV Educational Resource Site (HIS & HERS)**

## **gabapentin - Neurontin (and other generic drugs)**

### **General Information**

Gabapentin is a drug that is used to treat epilepsy, pain, sleeplessness, addiction, and some mental health problems. However, it is only FDA-approved for epilepsy.

### **Specifics**

Gabapentin is a well-respected and very effective medication. Gabapentin has a VERY long track record of effectiveness and safety.

Gabapentin works by stabilizing nerve cells.

### **Dosing**

Gabapentin is available as tablets or capsules in a variety of strengths.

**The dose varies but usually it is taken at least 3 times per day. If you find that gabapentin makes you clouded or forgetful or sedated, you might want to start with it once a day, and slowly work up to the suggested dose over several days.**

For pain, you may be instructed to take 1200 mg three times a day or more. For sleep, you may take 800-2400 mg at bedtime.

### **Adherence**

This refers to your willingness, ability, and actual performance in taking your medications.

For further information and tips on adherence, go to the **Adherence section** of this site.

It is very important to take every dose that is prescribed unless instructed by your healthcare provider.

If the medication is not taken correctly or long enough, you may not get the benefits of this medication.

Do not adjust the amount of the dose or the frequency of gabapentin without speaking to your healthcare provider first.

## Possible Side Effects

The package insert for most drugs including gabapentin is often overwhelming and scary with perhaps an overemphasis on side effects. We have summarized the important and more common problems here.

**Most people take gabapentin without any or very many side effects.**

**Gabapentin does not produce permanent side effects; any side effects that occur with gabapentin will go away with dose reduction or discontinuation of the medication.**

Many side effects get better with time.

The most frequent side effects of gabapentin are sleepiness, dry mouth, forgetfulness, or feeling slightly altered. Some people notice vivid dreams that occur while on gabapentin; however, gabapentin does not alter dreaming or sleep like many other drugs that affect the brain.

## Interactions

This refers to the way that gabapentin affects other medications and how other medications might affect gabapentin.

**Make sure that your healthcare provider is aware of all the medications you are taking so that important and possibly dangerous interactions are not overlooked.**

**Gabapentin can interact with other medications that can cause sedation which can make the sedation worse.**

**Gabapentin [should not be taken](#) within a couple of hours of taking a calcium supplement such as calcium carbonate, Tums, etc.**

**Report to you healthcare provider or go to an Emergency Room** if you have severe side effects, increasing side effects, increasing shortness of breath, fever, eye pain or redness, loss of vision, jaundice (eyes and skin turn yellow,) nausea and vomiting (so that you cannot hold down your food and liquids) or rash.

You can download this handout in PDF format by clicking [HERE](#).

9.30.2006