**Patient Information**

**Information for patients prescribed Gabapentin**

**What is gabapentin used for?**

Gabapentin is used to treat persistent pain, but is particularly good for nerve pain such as burning, shooting or stabbing pain. Gabapentin belongs to a group of medications called anticonvulsants which are also used to treat epilepsy.

**When should I take it?**

Gabapentin is normally started in small doses, taken regularly one to three times a day. The doses can be gradually increased depending on how you get on with it; your prescriber will guide you through increasing your doses.

If you are taking antacid medication, please wait for 2 hours after taking it before taking gabapentin.

**How should I take my gabapentin?**

- Tablets must be swallowed whole with a glass of water.
- Gabapentin can be taken on a full or empty stomach.
- Do not take more than prescribed.

**How long will it take to work?**

Every patient is different; you may notice some initial benefit within a few days; however it may take weeks.

Gabapentin does not work for everyone. If you do not feel any improvement in your pain after 6-8 weeks, do not suddenly stop your medication, please speak to your doctor.

**What are the side effects of gabapentin?**

Most side effects are mild and it is expected that they will go away after several days. Usually side effects are worse after starting gabapentin or increasing doses.

**Common side effects**

- Viral infection
- Drowsiness
- Dizziness
- Fatigue
- Impotence
- Muscle tremor
- Changes in blood pressure
- Nausea and vomiting
- Sore gums

If you have any of these side effects and they are severe, please seek urgent medical assistance.

**Less common side effects**

- Visual disturbances
- Indigestion
- Weight gain or weight loss
- Leg swelling
- Memory loss
■ Mood changes
■ Hallucinations
■ Rash
■ May affect normal breathing (very rare)

If any of these side effects occur, please contact your doctor or pharmacist for advice.

Can I take this medication long term?
Yes, if it helps. Please consider reviewing your medication with your doctors to assess if there is still a need to take it.

Can I drink alcohol?
Alcohol can increase the sedative effects of gabapentin. It is advisable to abstain from alcohol when you start taking gabapentin. Once you are on a stable dose, you may drink alcohol in moderation, but be cautious as it may make you more drowsy than normal.

Can I drive?
It is advised that you do not drive if you have recently started taking gabapentin or if you have recently changed doses. Once on a stable dose you can drive, as long as you do not feel drowsy. It remains the responsibility of all drivers, including patients, to consider whether they believe their driving may be impaired on every occasion when they drive.

What should I tell the doctor?
■ If you are allergic to any drugs.
■ Any other medication you are taking, including herbal and over the counter medications.
■ If you are pregnant or breastfeeding.
■ If you have kidney or liver problems.
■ If you have or had a history of excess alcohol, recreational drug use or addiction to prescribed or over the counter medications.

What do I do if I miss a dose?
■ Take it as soon as you remember.
■ However, if you are closer to your next dose, skip the missed dose and take your medication as normal.
■ Do not take 2 doses together.

What do I do if I want to stop taking gabapentin?
If you want to stop or reduce your gabapentin, please discuss this with your doctor. Do not suddenly stop taking your medication, as you may experience side effects.

Where can I find more information on gabapentin?
■ Please ask your prescriber for more information.
■ Your pharmacist can answer your questions.
■ Your medication packet will contain a patient information leaflet for you to read.
■ A good website to use is the Electronic Medical Compendium (search for EMC) or go directly to https://www.medicines.org.uk/emc