

gabapentin

Pronunciation: GA ba PEN tin

Brand: Gralise, Horizant, Neurontin

What is the most important information I should know about gabapentin?

Gabapentin can cause life-threatening breathing problems, especially if you already have a breathing disorder or if you use other medicines that can make you drowsy or slow your breathing. Seek emergency medical attention if you have very slow breathing.

Some people have thoughts about suicide or behavior changes while taking gabapentin. Stay alert to changes in your mood or symptoms. **Report any new or worsening symptoms to your doctor.**

Do not stop using gabapentin suddenly, even if you feel fine.

What is gabapentin?

Gabapentin is used together with other medicines to treat partial seizures in adults and children at least 3 years old.

Gabapentin is also used to treat nerve pain caused by herpes virus or shingles (herpes zoster) in adults.

Use only the brand and form of gabapentin your doctor has prescribed. Check your medicine each time you get a refill to make sure you receive the correct form.

Gralise is used only to treat nerve pain.

Horizant is used to treat nerve pain and restless legs syndrome (RLS).

Neurontin is used to treat nerve pain and seizures.

Gabapentin may also be used for purposes not listed in this medication guide.

What should I discuss with my healthcare provider before taking gabapentin?

You should not use gabapentin if you are allergic to it.

Tell your doctor if you have ever had:

- breathing problems or lung disease, such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD);
- kidney disease (or if you are on dialysis);
- diabetes;
- depression, a mood disorder, or suicidal thoughts or actions;
- a drug addiction;
- a seizure (unless you take gabapentin to treat seizures);
- liver disease;
- heart disease; or
- (for patients with RLS) if you are a day sleeper or work a night shift.

Some people have thoughts about suicide while taking this medicine. Children taking gabapentin may have behavior changes. Stay alert to changes in your mood or symptoms. **Report any new or worsening symptoms to your doctor.**

It is not known whether this medicine will harm an unborn baby. Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant.

Seizure control is very important during pregnancy, and having a seizure could harm both mother and baby. **Do not start or stop taking gabapentin for seizures without your doctor's advice, and tell your doctor right away if you become pregnant.**

If you are pregnant, your name may be listed on a pregnancy registry to track the effects of gabapentin on the baby.

It may not be safe to breastfeed while using this medicine. Ask your doctor about any risk.

How should I take gabapentin?

Follow all directions on your prescription label. Do not take this medicine in larger or smaller amounts or for longer than recommended.

If your doctor changes your brand, strength, or type of gabapentin, your dosage needs may change. Ask your pharmacist if you have any questions about the new kind of gabapentin you receive at the pharmacy.

Both **Gralise** and **Horizant** should be taken with food.

Neurontin can be taken with or without food.

If you break a **Neurontin** tablet and take only half of it, take the other half at your next dose. Any tablet that has been broken should be used as soon as possible or within a few days.

Swallow the **capsule** or **tablet** whole and do not crush, chew, break, or open it.

Measure **liquid medicine** carefully. Use the dosing syringe provided, or use a medicine dose-measuring device (not a kitchen spoon).

Do not stop using gabapentin suddenly, even if you feel fine. Stopping suddenly may cause increased seizures. Follow your doctor's instructions about tapering your dose.

In case of emergency, wear or carry medical identification to let others know you have seizures.

This medicine can cause unusual results with certain medical tests. Tell any doctor who treats you that you are using gabapentin.

Store gabapentin **tablets** and **capsules** at room temperature away from light and moisture.

Store the **liquid** medicine in the refrigerator. Do not freeze.

What happens if I miss a dose?

Take the medicine as soon as you can, but skip the missed dose if it is almost time for your next dose. **Do not** take two doses at one time.

If you take Horizant: Skip the missed dose and use your next dose at the regular time. **Do not** use two doses of Horizant at one time.

What happens if I overdose?

Seek emergency medical attention or call the Poison Help line at 1-800-222-1222.

What should I avoid while taking gabapentin?

Avoid driving or hazardous activity until you know how this medicine will affect you. Your reactions could be impaired. **Dizziness or drowsiness can cause falls, accidents, or severe injuries.**

Avoid taking an antacid within 2 hours before you take gabapentin. Antacids can make it harder for your body to absorb gabapentin.

Avoid drinking alcohol while taking gabapentin.

What are the possible side effects of gabapentin?

Get emergency medical help if you have **signs of an allergic reaction**: hives; difficult breathing; swelling of your face, lips, tongue, or throat.

Seek medical treatment if you have a serious drug reaction that can affect many parts of your body.

Symptoms may include: skin rash, fever, swollen glands, muscle aches, severe weakness, unusual bruising, upper stomach pain, or yellowing of your skin or eyes.

Report any new or worsening symptoms to your doctor, such as: mood or behavior changes, anxiety, panic attacks, trouble sleeping, or if you feel impulsive, irritable, agitated, hostile, aggressive, restless, hyperactive (mentally or physically), depressed, or have thoughts about suicide or hurting yourself.

Call your doctor at once if you have:

- weak or shallow breathing;
- blue-colored skin, lips, fingers, and toes;
- confusion, extreme drowsiness or weakness;
- problems with balance or muscle movement;
- unusual or involuntary eye movements; or
- increased seizures.

Gabapentin can cause life-threatening breathing problems. A person caring for you should seek emergency medical attention if you have slow breathing with long pauses, blue colored lips, or if you are hard to wake up. Breathing problems may be more likely in older adults or in people with COPD.

Some side effects are more likely in children taking gabapentin. Contact your doctor if the child taking this medicine has any of the following side effects:

- changes in behavior;
- memory problems;
- trouble concentrating; or
- acting restless, hostile, or aggressive.

Common side effects may include:

- fever, chills, sore throat, body aches, unusual tiredness;
- jerky movements;
- headache;
- double vision;

- swelling of your legs and feet;
- tremors;
- trouble speaking;
- dizziness, drowsiness, tiredness;
- problems with balance or eye movements; or
- nausea, vomiting.

This is not a complete list of side effects and others may occur. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

What other drugs will affect gabapentin?

Using gabapentin with other drugs that make you drowsy or slow your breathing can cause dangerous side effects or death. Ask your doctor before using opioid medication, a sleeping pill, cold or allergy medicine, a muscle relaxer, or medicine for anxiety or seizures.

Other drugs may affect gabapentin, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal products. Tell your doctor about all your current medicines and any medicine you start or stop using.

Where can I get more information?

Your pharmacist can provide more information about gabapentin.

Remember, keep this and all other medicines out of the reach of children, never share your medicines with others, and use this medication only for the indication prescribed.

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