

Gynaecology Department - Vulval Clinics

Gabapentin and Pregabalin

In some women with vulval pain the nerves supplying the vulva are irritated and send abnormal signals back to the spinal cord, which are then interpreted by the brain as pain. This can occur even when the skin is not being touched.

Gabapentin (Ga-ba-pen-tin, also called Neurontin) and Pregabalin (Pre-gab-a-lin, also called Lyrica) belong to a group of drugs called anti-convulsant or anti-epileptic drugs, but they are also useful for people with pain problems because they work on the way the nerves conduct the electrical pain messages.

These drugs are used as second line treatments for women who have not been helped by Amitriptyline and Nortriptyline, or who have had significant side effects from them. Sometimes Gabapentin can be added to Amitriptyline for women who have had a partial response.

How to take the tablets

Gabapentin and Pregabalin are started at low doses and increased according to the plan described overleaf. There may be some relief from your pain within a few days, but it may take a few weeks for your pain to improve.

The tablets should be taken with a drink, with or without food, but you should not take the tablets within 2 hours of taking antacid (indigestion) medication.



Patient Information

These drugs are not addictive, but should not be stopped suddenly (this can make you feel ill). The dose of the drug should be gradually reduced over two to four weeks. Some patients may experience insomnia, headache, nausea, anxiety, diarrhoea, flu syndrome, nervousness, depression, pain, convulsions and dizziness on withdrawal of the drug.

Both Gabapentin and Pregabalin can be taken with the oral contraceptive pill.

Side effects

Most side effects are mild and will go away after a few days. The commonest side effects are headaches, tiredness, drowsiness, dizziness, constipation, nausea and vomiting but these usually wear off.

If you have any severe symptoms which are worrying you, contact your GP or the vulval clinic for advice.

Remember if you are drowsy or dizzy do not operate machinery or drive. It is not advisable to drink alcohol whilst taking these drugs as it can make you more drowsy.

Tell your doctor if:

Gabapentin and Pregabalin are not suitable for everyone. You should tell your doctor if you:

- Have any drug allergies;
- Are taking any other medicines;
- Are pregnant or breastfeeding, or plan to become pregnant;
- Are diabetic;
- Have any problems with your liver or kidneys;
- Have had a heart attack or pancreatitis recently;
- Have any psychiatric problems.

Patient Information

Follow the plan below

Gabapentin:

Go up to the next dose level **every day**. You can stick at any level when you get relief from your pain. **You do not have to go up to level 6.**

Once you are on 600mg (2 capsules) regularly you can ask the pharmacist to dispense 600mg tablets, so you only need to take one instead of two.

Day/Date	8.00am	2.00pm	10.00pm
1	-	-	1 capsule (300mg)
2	1 capsule (300mg)	-	1 capsule (300mg)
3	1 capsule (300mg)	1 capsule (300mg)	1 capsule (300mg)
4	1 capsule (300mg)	1 capsule (300mg)	2 capsules (600mg)
5	2 capsules (600mg)	1 capsule (300mg)	2 capsules (600mg)
6	2 capsules (600mg)	2 capsules (600mg)	2 capsules (600mg)

Pregabalin:

Go up to the next level **every week**. You can stick at any level when you get relief from your pain. **You do not have to go up to level 3.**

Once you are on 300mg (4 capsules) you can ask your pharmacist to dispense 300mg capsules so you only have to take one instead of four.

Patient Information

Week/Date	8.00am	8.00pm
1	1 capsule (75mg)	1 capsules (75mg)
2	2 capsules (150mg)	2 capsules (150mg)
3	4 capsules (300mg)	4 capsules (300mg)

Further Information

If you have any questions, please contact: Colposcopy clinic 024 7696 7222 (8.00am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday).

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format please contact 024 7696 7222 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

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Document History

Department:	Gynaecology
Contact:	27391
Updated:	December 2019
Review:	December 2021
Version:	3.1
Reference:	HIC/LFT/1603/13