

# Gabapentin

- Keep this leaflet safe, as you may need to refer to it again.
- Please ask your vet if you have any further questions.
- This medicine has been prescribed for *your* pet ONLY. Do not take it yourself or give it to another person or any other animal; it may harm them even if their symptoms appear to be the same.

The medicine you have been given for your dog or cat is called gabapentin. It may have a trade name such as Neurontin®, but often will just be called gabapentin.

## What is gabapentin?

Gabapentin belongs to a group of medicines that are called *anti-epileptics*. These drugs act on the brain to prevent epileptic seizures (fits). Some anti-epileptic drugs, such as gabapentin, can also help relieve anxiety, chronic pain and neuropathic pain (pain originating from damaged nerves).

## Why has my pet been prescribed gabapentin?

Gabapentin can be used in cats and dogs to help treat epilepsy, anxiety issues (such as going to the veterinary clinic), chronic pain disorders and neuropathic pain. It is often used in cases of anxiety-related problem behaviour, especially those which appear to have some association with pain and in particular neuropathic pain, such as aggression associated with spinal compression due to disc degeneration.

## How should I store gabapentin?

This medicine does not require special storage conditions. For safety, **all medicines should be kept out of the reach and sight of children.**

## How do I give gabapentin tablets or capsules to my pet?

Try to disguise them in a small quantity of strongly flavoured food that your pet likes. Alternatively, the tablets or capsules can be placed carefully on the back of the pet's tongue and their mouth held closed until the entire dose has been swallowed.

## How long will my pet need to take gabapentin?

Your vet will advise you on the length of time for which you will need to give this medicine. This may vary between patients and could be for the rest of their life.

## What should I do if I run out of gabapentin?

Try not to run out. Make sure you order more gabapentin from your vet if your supply is getting low. If you do run out, contact your own vet for further advice and restart the course as soon as possible. **Gabapentin tablets or capsules should not be stopped suddenly;** the drug needs to be reduced gradually over time before it is withdrawn.

## What should I do if I miss a dose?

If you do miss a dose, give your pet the dose that they should have had **straight away**. Make sure the next dose is separated by at least 6 hours before reverting to normal dosing time. **DO NOT** give double doses to make up for missed doses.

## What should I do if my pet is accidentally given too many doses?

**Contact your vet immediately.** Currently there is limited information available about gabapentin overdose in pets. However, in people it is known that an overdose of gabapentin is unlikely to be fatal.

## Can my pet take gabapentin if I am already giving them other drugs?

Tell your vet if you are giving your pet any other medications, even if you think they already know. This includes herbal or off-the-shelf remedies from a pet shop or pharmacy. Do not give your pet antacids (medicines used to help treat stomach ulcers) if they are taking gabapentin.

## What are the possible side effects of gabapentin for my pet?

Gabapentin may cause your pet to become slightly incoordinated or unsteady and a bit drowsy. If your pet shows any unusual symptoms whilst taking this medication, please contact your vet.

## What should I do if my pet is unwell while taking gabapentin?

If your pet is unwell while receiving medication, **do not stop gabapentin suddenly** but contact your vet as soon as possible for advice.

## What should I do if a person accidentally takes this drug?

If a person accidentally takes your pet's medicine, the person should be taken to the local hospital **immediately**. Take this leaflet and any remaining tablets or capsules plus their container (even if it is empty) with you.

## Whom do I contact if I want to know more?

If you have any questions about this drug, or concerns about your pet's health, contact your own vet. They will know your pet's medical history and will know about gabapentin.

### The Prescribing Cascade

This medicine is authorized for use in human patients and is used by vets under the 'prescribing cascade'. The medicine is not authorized by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD), an executive agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), for use in dogs/cats/pets. Your vet can explain the 'prescribing cascade' in further detail to you and also explain why they are prescribing this drug for your pet. You will be asked to sign a consent form stating that you understand the reasons that the drug is being prescribed and its possible complications, before the treatment is issued.

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