

## **Information for Adult Patients**

### **Prescribed Pregabalin for the Treatment of Pain**

#### **Medical Day Case Unit**

### **Why have I been prescribed Pregabalin?**

- Pregabalin is used to treat some types of persistent pain.
- It is especially good for nerve pain, such as burning, shooting or stabbing pain.
- Pregabalin belongs to a group of medicines called anticonvulsants which are also used to treat epilepsy.
- You may notice that information from the manufacturer may not mention your type of pain.

### **How does Pregabalin work?**

- Pregabalin works by changing the way that nerves send messages to your brain. If the messages are reduced, then the pain will be reduced.

### **When should I take it?**

- Normally, the starting dose is small and may be taken between one and three times a day, but the dose will be gradually increased.
- Normally a minimum dose of pregabalin 75mg twice a day is needed to get any benefit and the dose may need to be increased to pregabalin 300 mg twice a day.
- You will be told how much to start taking and how to increase the dose. The table at the end of the leaflet will help you remember when to increase the dose.
- If you are taking antacid medication, it is best to wait for two hours after taking it before taking pregabalin.

## **How is Pregabalin taken?**

- The tablets should be swallowed whole, with a glass of water.
- Pregabalin may be taken on an empty or full 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 up to 1 month for a full effect. You may need to increase the dose for pregabalin to be effective.
- Pregabalin does not work for everyone. If you do not feel any improvement in your pain after 4 – 6 weeks, do not suddenly stop taking the tablets but speak to your doctor.

## **What are the possible side effects?**

- Most side effects are mild and it is expected that they will go away after several days.
- Generally side effects are more troublesome just after starting pregabalin or increasing the dose. It is important to persist in taking pregabalin as these side effects usually wear off.
- Common side effects include; drowsiness, dizziness, fatigue and muscle tremor. If you have these side effects and they are severe contact your doctor or pharmacist for advice.
- Less common side effects include vision disturbances, indigestion, weight gain, leg swelling, memory loss, mood changes, hallucinations or rash. If any of these side effects occur, contact your doctor or pharmacist for advice.

## **Can I take this medication long-term?**

- Yes, if it helps. You may wish to reduce treatment every so often, to check if your pain is still a problem. This should be done with the advice of your GP or pain specialist, gradually reducing your medication over a period of time.

## **Can I drink alcohol?**

- Alcohol increases the sedative effects of pregabalin, it is best not to drink alcohol when you start taking it. Once settled on a steady dose, you may drink alcohol in moderation but it may make you more drowsy than normal.

## **Can I drive?**

- Pregabalin may cause drowsiness. If this happens, do not drive.

## **What should I tell the doctor?**

- If you are allergic to any drugs
- If you are taking any other medicines or herbal medicines
- If you are pregnant or breast feeding, or if you are planning to become pregnant in the future
- If you have a kidney problem
- If you have or have had a history of excessive alcohol use, recreational drug use or addiction to prescribed or over-the-counter medication.

## **What if I forget or miss a dose?**

- Take it as soon as you remember.
- However, if it is almost time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and take your medication as normal.
- Do not take two doses together.

## **What if I want to stop taking Pregabalin?**

- Do not stop taking pregabalin suddenly, you might experience withdrawal symptoms. Speak to your healthcare professional (doctor, nurse, and pharmacist) who will be able to supervise a gradual reduction.

*This information is not intended to replace your doctor's advice. We advise you to read the manufacturer's information for patients, which will be supplied by your pharmacist when your medicine is dispensed. Keep all medicines away from children, vulnerable adults or pets*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Morning</b>	<b>Lunch</b>	<b>Tea time</b>	<b>Night</b>

Further information: <http://www.fpm.ac.uk/faculty-of-pain-medicine/patient-information>

