



**North of Tyne**  
Area Prescribing Committee

# **Pregabalin slow dose increase Patient Information Leaflet**

**Information for Primary Care April 2015  
(Review Date April 2016)**

## **Patient information**

The information in this leaflet is to guide your use of pregabalin safely. Further information is available inside the medication packaging. Some medicines used to treat pain symptoms are used for other health reasons. For example some medicines used to treat epilepsy can help to improve nerve pain. Your doctor, nurse or pharmacist will explain the reason why you are taking your medicine and what to expect.

## **What is pregabalin for?**

- Pregabalin is a medicine which may help improve your pain control. It is different from other pain relievers. It is especially good for nerve pain, for example shooting or burning pains.
- Pregabalin is also used to treat epilepsy and anxiety, but you have been prescribed it to improve pain control.

## **How should I take pregabalin?**

- Please take pregabalin as per the chart on the other side of this leaflet. Do not stop taking this medication without advice from your GP.
- Once your pain has improved to an acceptable level, continue to take pregabalin at the dose you have reached.
- Pregabalin can be taken with or without food.
- Swallow the capsules with a drink of water.

### Are there any side effects?

- All medicines can sometimes cause side effects. If you are worried, you can talk to your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.
- The most common side effects of this drug are dry mouth, constipation dizziness, drowsiness. A small number of people may feel sick or have diarrhoea. Some people may gain weight. Most of these side effects will improve after several days, so it is worth carrying on with the pregabalin.

### How to manage side effects

- Dry mouth- Drink more **non**-alcoholic drinks, chewing also increases saliva in the mouth.
- Constipation- Drink more non-alcoholic drinks, eat plenty of fibre containing foods and fruit and vegetables.
- Please see your pharmacist or GP if problems continue.

A common side effect of this drug is drowsiness. If you are drowsy you must not drive or operate machinery.

**Drinking alcohol may make you more drowsy.** Restrict your alcohol intake to 1-2 units per day (1 unit= ½ pint beer or lager a small glass of wine or a measure of spirit)

### How long will I take pregabalin for?

You will probably need to take this medicine for as long as you have the pain.

Other treatments or pain killers may also help your pain and the dose of pregabalin may need to be reduced.

**Please do not stop pregabalin suddenly.** It needs to be reduced gradually **over at least one week.** Please discuss with your doctor before stopping.

### Storage instructions

As with all medicines, keep them in a safe place away from children.

### Starting dose

Follow these instructions when first starting pregabalin. Slowly increasing the dose should lead to fewer side effects. If you have any problems at any time, drop back to the previous dose. If your pain is controlled stay on the same level. Your doctor will give you capsules of the right strength.

### Example Slow Dosing Schedule for Pregabalin using 25mg capsules

	Morning	Night	
Day 1		ONE (25mg)	
Day 2		ONE (25mg)	
Day 3		ONE (25mg)	
Day 4	ONE (25mg)	ONE (25mg)	for 7 days
Day 11	TWO (50mg)	TWO (50mg)	for 7 days
Day 18	THREE (75mg)	THREE (75mg)	for 7 days
Day 25	SIX (150mg)	SIX (150mg)	for 7 days
Day 32	TWELVE (300mg)	TWELVE (300mg)	

Many people get good control with 150mg TWICE DAILY. Once your pain is controlled your doctor will give you capsules of the appropriate strength so that you don't have to take large numbers of capsules. If you have any questions ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.