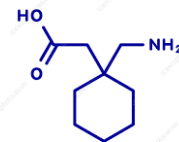




# Gabapentin Alert!



## What is Gabapentin?

Gabapentin, known by the brand name Neurontin, belongs to its own drug class, Gabapentinoids. It is considered an anticonvulsant, and is most used to treat epilepsy, restless leg syndrome, hot flashes, and neuropathic pain for diabetics and arthritis, but can also be used to help with alcohol and cocaine withdrawal. It is often used as a less-addictive alternative to Opioids; however, Gabapentin addiction and abuse still occur in many patients. The “estimated prevalence of gabapentin abuse and misuse (is) 40–65% among individuals with other prescriptions and 15–22% in populations abusing opioids compared with only 1% in the general population.” (Springer) In addition to its potentially addictive nature, Gabapentin can cause suicidal thoughts, moods swings, and abrupt changes in behavior. Therefore, Gabapentin should be monitored and used following doctor instructions. Sources: [Is Gabapentin \(Neurontin\) Addictive? - Addiction Center](#); [Gabapentin: Uses, Side Effects, Dosages, Interactions & More \(clevelandclinic.org\)](#); and [Current Evidence on Abuse and Misuse of Gabapentinoids | SpringerLink](#)

## Is Gabapentin an opioid?

Gabapentin is not an opiate, however, “**January 9, 2019** – In an effort to continue to combat the opioid epidemic in Michigan, the Dept. of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA), with the support of the Michigan Board of Pharmacy, has modified its Pharmacy Rules to categorize Gabapentin as a Schedule 5 controlled substance.” Source: [LARA - Gabapentin Scheduled as Controlled Substance to help with State's Opioid Epidemic \(michigan.gov\)](#)

## Can Gabapentin interact with other medications?

Gabapentin can interact with other medications, so it is important that doctor’s instructions are followed closely. Different drug interactions can cause different effects. For example, interactions can interfere with how well a drug works, while others can cause increased side effects. When someone takes Gabapentin, they should be sure to tell their physician and/or pharmacist about all prescription, over the counter, and other drugs being used. To avoid any additional interactions, medical professionals should also be informed of any vitamins, herbs, and supplements being taken. Source: [Gabapentin: Side Effects, Dosage, Uses, and More \(healthline.com\)](#)

## Does Gabapentin affect the ability to drive?

Gabapentin can slow thinking and motor skills and cause drowsiness or dizziness. Each person’s metabolism is different so the length of these effects may differ. Persons should not drive or use heavy machinery while taking this drug until they know how it affects them.

## Can Gabapentin be used if a person is in Recovery from a Substance Use Disorder?

Gabapentin holds a high risk of abuse and overdose which has been noted internationally. Persons in recovery from a substance use disorder are at risk for misuse/abuse. Therefore, it is advised to only use this prescription medication when prescribed and monitored by a physician. This medication has several properties that mimic other controlled substances. Additionally, it should be noted that withdrawal symptoms can occur when stopping Gabapentin. Source: [Should I Be Worried About Gabapentin in Addiction Recovery? - Royal Life Centers at Chapter 5: Royal Life Centers at Chapter 5 \(chapter5recovery.com\)](#); <https://doi.org/10.1111/add.13324>

## Is there a greater risk for youth?

The higher metabolism of younger populations could place them at risk for more Gabapentin withdrawal issues, leading to impulsivity, emotional instability, or aggression. Youth are also more likely to illegally use other substances with this class of drugs, resulting in the high risk of unintentional overdose. Parents should monitor teen’s use of this drug when prescribed by a physician. Source: [Associations Between Gabapentinoids and Injuries, Accidents, Mental Health, and Criminality | PracticeUpdate](#)

## Side effects to be aware of when using Gabapentin

Some of the most common side effects that might occur with use of Gabapentin include viral infection, fever, nausea and vomiting, trouble speaking, hostility, and jerky movements. Speak to your pharmacist for more details. **If serious side effects occur call a doctor right away. Call 911 if symptoms feel life-threatening or if having a medical emergency.**