

## **Pregabalin**

### **Why do I need pregabalin?**

Pregabalin is a drug used to treat nerve pain. This type of pain is often not relieved by traditional painkillers. It can be used in combination with other painkillers to improve your pain relief.

### **How does pregabalin work?**

Pregabalin works by changing the way in which nerves send messages to your brain. When something presses on a nerve, or a nerve doesn't work properly in some way, the nerve can send false messages to your brain. The brain thinks that a part of your body is being hurt when it is not. This makes you actually feel pain. By altering the way nerves work, pregabalin may reduce your pain.

### **Isn't pregabalin for treating epilepsy?**

Yes, pregabalin is used for treating epilepsy by 'calming down nerves'. Research has shown that pregabalin by a 'similar process' is also effective in helping to relieve certain types of pain.

### **How long will pregabalin take to work?**

You should notice that your pain starts to improve over one to two weeks after starting pregabalin, but it may take longer in some people. However, some people feel benefit straight away. Your treatment will be reviewed when you next see the doctor or nurse.

### **How long will I have to take pregabalin for?**

If pregabalin is helpful, you can continue taking it and your treatment will be reviewed regularly. There is no possibility of you becoming addicted to the tablets. It is also important that you continue to take your regular painkiller, unless you have been advised to stop taking these by your doctor.

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

You should take pregabalin as instructed by your Doctor. Pregabalin can be taken with or without food and should be taken in addition to your current tablets unless you are told otherwise. Pregabalin is normally started at a low dose and the dose gradually adjusted to gain optimal effect whilst minimising side effects. Dosages are normally increased after an interval of 3-7 days.

### **Do I need any tests whilst I am taking pregabalin?**

No, you will not need any special checks whilst you are taking pregabalin.

### **Are there any side effects?**

All drugs have side effects but they do not happen in all the people who take them. The most common side effects of pregabalin are dizziness, sleepiness and decreased concentration which may increase the occurrence of accidental falls, especially in the elderly. Therefore you may need to be careful until you have become used to the effects of pregabalin. Other possible side effects are detailed in the drug information sheet supplied with the tablets. If you have troublesome side effects from pregabalin speak to your doctor or nurse straight away. Side effects from pregabalin may reduce or disappear after taking the same dose for a few days.

### **Can I drink alcohol whilst taking pregabalin?**

We advise that you should avoid drinking alcohol whilst taking pregabalin.

### **Is it safe for me to drive or operate machinery whilst I am taking pregabalin?**

Since pregabalin may cause dizziness, sleepiness and decreased concentration we advise that you should not drive or operate complex machinery until these effects have worn off.

### **Is it safe for me to take other medicines whilst I am receiving treatment with pregabalin?**

The side effects of dizziness, sleepiness and decreased concentration may be increased if pregabalin is taken together with certain other drugs (such as oxycodone or lorazepam). Before you take or buy any new medicines – including herbal remedies – tell your doctor or pharmacist that you are taking pregabalin and ask their advice.

### **What should I do if I forget to take a dose?**

You should take a missed dose 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 'double up' to make up for your missed dose.

### **Stopping pregabalin**

Do not stop taking pregabalin unless your Doctor tells you to. If pregabalin is discontinued then this is normally done gradually over a number of weeks.

### **Additional Information**

This medication has been prescribed for you. It should not be taken by anyone else. The information in this leaflet is not intended to replace your doctor's advice or the information supplied in the product information sheet. If you require more information or have any questions, please speak to your doctor.