

Pregabalin

Pregabalin (Lyrica) is FDA-approved in the US for seizures, fibromyalgia, and other pain conditions (diabetic neuropathic pain, post-herpetic neuralgia, pain after spinal cord injury). It also treats anxiety, particularly social and generalized anxiety, and is approved for this use in Europe.

Pregabalin is more effective than US medications for anxiety (like the SSRI antidepressants) in some studies. Pregabalin deepens sleep and eases withdrawal from benzodiazepines and alcohol. It may also help pain and restless leg syndrome.

How it works

Pregabalin works through glutamate and calcium channels in the brain. Although it bears some chemical resemblance to GABA, pregabalin doesn't directly bind to the GABA receptors that benzodiazepines work on. Pregabalin's effects are similar to those of gabapentin (Neurontin) and tiagabine (Gabitril).

Addiction

Pregabalin is not addictive, but is a controlled substance in some states because people have misused the drug. Misuse is rare and is usually done to achieve effects similar to benzodiazepines or opioids.

How should I take it?

Take pregabalin at night with or without food. Some people take part of the dose in the daytime, but this can be sedating. The optimal dose for anxiety is 300-600 mg

What if I forget a dose?

Take the missed dose as soon as you remember it. However, if it is almost time for the next dose, skip the missed dose and continue your

regular dosing schedule. Do not take a double dose to make up for a missed one.

How long do I need to take it?

How long you take pregabalin will depend on the reason you started it.

What happens if I stop it?

Withdrawal symptoms may include muscle cramps, nausea, headache, anxiety, and insomnia. Stopping pregabalin does cause seizures unless you are taking it for seizures.

Side effects

These side effects tend to improve with time or by lowering the dose:

Dizziness (30%), dyscoordination, drowsiness (20%), concentration problems. Blurred vision, weight gain of about 5 pounds on average, swelling (edema), and impaired concentration/attention.

As you are starting the medicine, use caution when driving or performing tasks that require alertness. This should not be a problem once you have adjusted to the medicine and know how it affects you.

Pregnancy: Pregabalin has not been adequately evaluated during pregnancy.

Interactions

Recreational drugs: Alcohol can increase the dizziness and dyscoordination of pregabalin.

Other medications: Pregabalin has few significant interactions because it is not metabolized through the liver. The web sites below help you check for drug interactions. You should talk with us about the information you find as many drug interactions have only a mild effect:

reference.medscape.com/drug-interactionchecker

How to store and dispose of medication

- Keep out of the reach of children.
- Store away from heat, direct light and damp places.
- To safely dispose of unwanted pills: Do not pour in the toilet or sink (it will enter the water supply). To prevent children or pets from eating it, mix unwanted pills in a bag with a little water and inedible trash (such as coffee grounds or kitty litter) and throw in the trash.

Cost and insurance coverage

Pregabalin is available as generic form. If you are paying out-of-pocket, the lowest cost is through www.goodrx.com.

—Chris Aiken, MD, updated 6/29/2025

Pregabalin

Brands	Lyrica
Dose range	100-600mg/day
Sizes	Caps: 25, 50, 75, 100, 150, 200, 225, and 300 mg Liquid: 20 mg/mL
Release date	12/30/2004
FDA-approval	Epilepsy (seizures), fibromyalgia, diabetic neuropathic pain, post-herpetic neuralgia, pain after spinal cord injury