



# PATIENT INFORMATION ON PREGABALIN

(Brand names: Lyrica, Lypralin, Luzalon,  
Neuroccord, Pregabalin)

This information sheet has been produced by the Australian Rheumatology Association to help you understand the medicine that has been prescribed for you. It includes important information about:

- **how you should take your medicine**
- **what are the possible side effects**
- **what tests you must have to monitor your condition and to detect unwanted effects**
- **other precautions you should take when you are taking Pregabalin**

Please read it carefully and discuss it with your doctor.

## Important things to remember

- While taking pregabalin you should see your rheumatologist (or nominated doctor) regularly to make sure the treatment is working and to minimise any possible side effects.
- You may need regular blood tests as directed by your rheumatologist.
- If you are concerned about any side effects you should contact your rheumatologist as soon as possible.

For more information about  
**RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS** and other  
inflammatory conditions see Arthritis  
Australia's website:  
[www.arthritisaustralia.com.au](http://www.arthritisaustralia.com.au)

## What is Pregabalin?

Pregabalin belongs to a group of medicines that are thought to control pain by working on brain chemicals which send signals to nerves. These chemicals are called **gamma-aminobutyric acid or GABA**. Pregabalin is best known as an anti-epileptic medicine.

Pregabalin may be used alone, or in combination with other medicines, to treat nerve (neuropathic) pain or fibromyalgia.

**Follow all directions given to you by your doctor carefully.** They may differ from the information contained in this leaflet.

## What benefit can you expect from your treatment?

Pregabalin is used to reduce neuropathic (nerve) pain. This means it is especially good at reducing sensations such as hot, burning, throbbing, shooting, stabbing, sharp, cramping, aching, tingling, numbness, pins and needles pain and for pain that keeps you awake at night.

## How is Pregabalin taken?

As the drugs to treat neuropathic pain can have unpleasant side effects your doctor will usually recommend that you start with a low dose of Pregabalin and slowly increase the dose to the lowest amount needed to control your pain.

Your doctor or pharmacist will tell you how many capsules you need to take each day. This may depend on your age, your condition and whether or not you are taking any other medicines.

Swallow the capsules whole with a full glass of water.

### ***When should it be taken?***

Pregabalin is usually taken in two divided doses, so morning and evening, it can sometimes also be as three divided doses, with a dose in the middle of the day.

It does not matter if you take this medicine before or after food.

**Take your medicine at about the same time each day.** Taking it at the same time each day will have the best effect. It will also help you remember when to take it.

### ***What is the dosage?***

Pregabalin comes in different strength capsules. The initial dose may be 25 to 75mg a day increasing every three to seven days. The lowest possible to control your pain will be used. The usual maintenance daily dose range is 150 mg per day to 600 mg per day given in two or three divided doses.

### ***Can other medicines be taken with Pregabalin?***

The absorption of Pregabalin is affected by certain indigestion/antacid mixtures.

Tell your doctor if you are taking any other medicines, including medicines that you buy at the chemist, supermarket or health food shop.

Your doctor or pharmacist can tell you what to do if you are taking any other medicines.

Pregabalin is sometimes used with other pain relieving medications.

### ***How long is the treatment continued?***

Treatment with Pregabalin is continued indefinitely as long as it is effective and as long as no serious side effects occur.

If you stop Pregabalin treatment for more than a few weeks there is a risk that your condition may worsen. Continue with your treatment unless advised by your doctor or unless side effects develop.

If you have an illness that makes you unwell enough to change plans for the day (e.g. gastroenteritis or fever), it is reasonable to miss the weekly dose until you have recovered.

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

You might experience side effects with your treatment. Tell your doctor if you are concerned about possible side effects.

A reduction in dose may minimise side effects so that you can continue to take the treatment. Your doctor will advise on any dose changes that are necessary.

### ***Most common possible side effects***

This list includes the more common side effects of pregabalin, they are usually mild and short-lived.

- feeling tired or drowsy
- increase in weight
- dizziness
- constipation
- diarrhoea
- nausea
- headache
- unsteadiness when walking, reduced co-ordination, shaking or tremors
- dry mouth
- blurred or double vision.

### ***Less common or rare possible side effects***

Contact your doctor if you suspect one of these adverse reaction:

- unusual changes in mood or behaviour
- signs of new or increased irritability or agitation
- signs of depression
- swelling of the hands, ankles or feet
- enlargement of breasts
- unexplained muscle pain, tenderness and weakness
- passing little to no urine.

### ***Very rare possible side effects***

Contact your doctor if you notice any of the following:

- shortness of breath, swelling of the feet and legs, weight increase due to fluid build-up
- irritated red eyes that are sensitive to light
- sudden signs of allergy such as rash, itching or hives, swelling of the face, lips, tongue or other parts of the body, shortness of breath, wheezing or difficulty breathing.

### ***More information about possible side effects***

Information that comes with your Pregabalin medicine describes in detail potential serious side effects that may occur.

Talk to your doctor or pharmacist if you have concerns about any possible side effects.

### ***What precautions are necessary?***

There have been reports of heart failure in some patients when taking Lyrica; these patients were mostly elderly with cardiovascular conditions. Before taking this medicine, you should tell your doctor if you have a history of heart disease.

### ***Blood tests***

Blood tests are not routinely required for this medication

**Use with other medicines**

Pregabalin and certain other medicines may influence each other (interaction). When taken with certain other medicines, the side effects seen may be increased for example, the degree of dizziness, sleepiness may be increased if pregabalin is taken together with medicines containing Oxycodone (used as a pain-killer).

Pregabalin may be taken with oral contraceptives.

**Use with alcohol**

The combination of Pregabalin and alcohol can cause significant drowsiness if you have just started on this medicine or the dose has recently been increased. You are advised not to drink alcohol when you first start this medicine and while the dose is being increased. Once you are on a stable dose and the drowsiness caused by the Pregabalin stops, you may drink alcohol.

**Driving and using machines**

Pregabalin may cause dizziness, sleepiness and decreased concentration. You should not drive, operate complex machinery or engage in other

potentially hazardous activities until you know whether this medicine affects your ability to perform these activities.

**How to store Pregabalin**

**Keep your capsules in the pack until it is time to take them.** If you take the capsules out of the pack they may not keep well.

Keep your capsules in a cool dry place where the temperature stays below 25°C. Do not store Pregabalin or any other medicine in the bathroom or near a sink. Do not leave it on a windowsill or in the car on hot days. Heat and dampness can destroy some medicines.

**Keep it where children cannot reach it.** A locked cupboard at least one-and-a-half metres above the ground is a good place to store medicines.

Do not throw away any medicines via wastewater or household waste. Ask your pharmacist how to throw away medicines you no longer use. These measures will help protect the environment.

**Questions?**

If you have any questions or concerns write them down and discuss them with your doctor.

**Your doctor's contact details**

If you are taking pregabalin you should see your rheumatologist regularly to make sure the treatment is working and to minimise any potential side effects.

The information in this sheet has been obtained from various sources and has been reviewed by the Australian Rheumatology Association. It is intended as an educational aid and does not cover all possible uses, actions, precautions, side effects, or interactions of the medicines mentioned. This information is not intended as medical advice for individual problems nor for making an individual assessment of the risks and benefits of taking a particular medicine. It can be reproduced in its entirety but cannot be altered without permission from the ARA. The NHMRC publication: *How to present the evidence for consumers: preparation of consumer publications* (2000) was used as a guide in developing this publication.