

## Gabapentin

### Recovery-Focused Treatment for Alcohol Use Disorder

#### How can gabapentin help me cut down or stop drinking?

Gabapentin can reduce your desire to drink and can help you stop drinking. Gabapentin may also help improve symptoms of anxiety and difficulty sleeping that may occur when stopping alcohol use.

#### How does gabapentin work?

- Gabapentin works on your brain to reduce your desire to drink alcohol.
- It can help reduce your desire to drink and help you to drink less.

#### Will I need other forms of treatment?

A successful alcohol treatment program will include a combination of medicine and social support, like Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) meetings, counseling, individual or group therapy, and sometimes hospital treatment.

#### What do I need to know before starting gabapentin?

- Gabapentin is also commonly used to treat nerve pain.
- Tell your provider if you have kidney disease or are on hemodialysis, so your dose can be adjusted.
- You should not take gabapentin if you are pregnant, planning on getting pregnant or are breastfeeding.
- Taking medicine for an alcohol use disorder is not substituting one drug for another.

#### How should I take gabapentin?

- The recommended dose of gabapentin for the treatment of alcohol use disorder is 300–600 milligrams (mg) three times daily.
- Gabapentin can be taken with or without food. If you take an antacid containing aluminum and magnesium, such as Maalox<sup>®</sup>, Mylanta<sup>®</sup>, Gelusil<sup>®</sup>, Gaviscon<sup>®</sup>, or Di-Gel<sup>™</sup>, you should wait at least 2 hours before taking your next dose of gabapentin.
- If you miss a dose, do not double up your next dose.
- Do not drive, operate heavy machinery, or do other dangerous activities until you know how gabapentin affects you. Gabapentin can slow your thinking and motor skills.



## What are some side effects of gabapentin?

Common Side Effects	What Can I Do if I Experience This?
Dizziness	Rise slowly to prevent falls.
Tiredness	This is a common side effect, and your body will likely adjust over time.
Swollen Legs or Arms	Elevate your legs above the level of your heart whenever possible. Let your provider know if you notice any swelling in your arms or legs.

### Less common, but can be severe:

Tell your provider immediately if you have any of the following:

- Thoughts of harming yourself or others.
- Fever, rash, swollen, painful, or tender lymph glands in the neck, armpit, or groin; unusual bleeding or bruising; or yellow eyes or skin, especially if they are new, worse or worry you.
- Discuss any symptoms that you think may be due to this medication with your healthcare provider.

All medicines can have side effects. Not everyone has side effects though. They usually get better as your body gets used to the new medicine. Talk with your provider or pharmacist if any of the above side effects trouble you.



### How long do I have to take gabapentin?

- You and your provider will decide on your treatment plan. Most people take gabapentin for at least 6 months and often longer.
- Do not stop your medication without talking to your healthcare provider first.

**Contact info:**

**Veterans Crisis Line**  
1-800-273-TALK (8255) or Text - 838255