

Pregabalin

Lyrica · Lyrica CR is a different formulation

For certain nerve pain, fibromyalgia or seizures; sometimes used for ongoing anxiety.

From Jeffrey Panko, PMHNP-BC's education collection ·

Draft for review · Clinical content has not been revalidated for this website.

CONTROLLED MEDICINE / C-V

DO NOT STOP SUDDENLY

The right dose depends on your kidneys, your exact product and the condition being treated.

What it is used for

Regular pregabalin treats certain nerve pain, fibromyalgia and, with other medicines, some seizures. Lyrica CR has a narrower pain-treatment role.

It may treat generalized anxiety, especially when other options do not suit you. This is off-label in the US. Ask which symptom your prescriber is targeting.

How it works

Pregabalin changes how nerve cells send some chemical messages. This can help reduce certain pain and seizure signals; it is not a benzodiazepine.

The exact link to each benefit is not fully understood. Feeling sleepy or unusually relaxed is not, by itself, proof that treatment is working.

What to expect over time

FIRST WEEK

Some relief may begin. Dizziness and sleepiness can also appear.

NEXT FEW WEEKS

Your team adjusts the dose and checks whether daily life is easier.

ONGOING

Keep reviews. Track weight, swelling, mood and any urge to take extra.

Taking your medication

Regular capsules are usually taken two or three times daily, with or without food. Follow your own schedule and swallow capsules whole.

Lyrica CR: take once daily after the evening meal. Swallow whole; do not split, crush or chew. Do not swap products yourself.

Use only the prescribed dose. Ask about a slower increase or timing changes if sleepy. Do not let yourself run out; request refills early.

When to get help

Call 911: slow/difficult breathing, blue lips, inability to wake, collapse or throat/tongue swelling. Stop and seek emergency care for severe allergy.

Get urgent advice: new rash/hives before another dose; swelling with breathlessness, rapid weight gain, or unexplained muscle pain/weakness with fever.

New suicidal thoughts or major mood changes: contact your team immediately, including during dose reduction. Call 911 for immediate danger.

Early side effects

Dizziness, sleepiness, blurred vision, dry mouth, constipation and foggy thinking can occur. Do not drive until you know your response. Report falls, persistent vision changes or troublesome slowing.

Other effects to discuss

Weight gain and puffiness in hands, feet or ankles can occur. Mention sexual side effects or an unusually high feeling. Report changes rather than assuming they are harmless or your fault.

What to keep track of

Your team may check kidney function and adjust the dose. Routine pregabalin blood levels are usually unnecessary. Keep track of symptom relief, daily activity, balance, weight, swelling and mood.

Before you start

Tell your team about kidney or heart disease, breathing problems or sleep apnea, falls, allergies, depression and substance use. Bring every medicine and supplement. Discuss pregnancy plans and contraception: a possible small increase in birth-defect risk has been reported. If pregnant, contact your team without stopping suddenly. US labeling advises against breastfeeding during treatment; ask about a safe feeding and treatment plan.

Medicines & interactions

Opioids & other sedatives

Opioids, benzodiazepines, sleep aids and sedating allergy medicines can add dangerous breathing problems and impairment. Combinations need a specific safety plan.

Alcohol

Avoid alcohol. It adds to sleepiness and can worsen slowed breathing. Ask before taking any new medicine or supplement.

Some heart/diabetes drugs

ACE inhibitors can add swelling/allergy risk; pioglitazone and similar diabetes medicines can add fluid retention. Your pharmacist can check the exact products.

Gabapentin

Do not combine or swap it yourself. The medicines overlap, and side effects may add up. A planned switch needs instructions from your team.

Everyday tips

Use dose reminders and plan refills ahead.

Track what you can do, not just a symptom score.

Use agreed therapy or pain-management skills.

Tell your team about extra doses without embarrassment.

Your questions, answered

What if I miss regular pregabalin?

Take it when remembered unless nearly time for the next; then skip it. Never double. Several missed doses can cause withdrawal; call if unsure.

What if I miss Lyrica CR?

After missing the evening meal dose, take it before bed after a snack. If missed then, take it after breakfast. If that dose is also missed, wait until the usual evening dose. Never double.

Can it cause dependence or addiction?

Yes. Physical dependence means your body adapts; it is not the same as addiction, but misuse and addiction are possible. Report cravings, extra doses or trouble cutting down.

Can I stop once I feel better?

Ask for a taper. Sudden stopping can cause anxiety, poor sleep, sweating, stomach symptoms or seizures. A serious allergic reaction is an exception: stop and get urgent help.

Storage & safety

Store securely at room temperature, away from moisture and children. Never share. Overdose can be fatal even without another medicine. Call Poison Control at 1-800-222-1222 right away for an overdose; call 911 for breathing trouble, collapse or inability to wake.

About this information

For general information only; not a substitute for individualized medical advice. This sheet does not cover every risk or interaction. Ask your prescriber or pharmacist before changing how you take this medication.

Sources

1. <https://dailymed.nlm.nih.gov/dailymed/lookup.cfm?setid=d4734e7d-5079-455e-8ff5-8f4539c998a9>
 2. <https://dailymed.nlm.nih.gov/dailymed/drugInfo.cfm?setid=f280bbd8-2af2-444a-bd96-e409337ca6dd>
 3. <https://www.gov.uk/drug-safety-update/pregabalin-lyrica-findings-of-safety-study-on-risks-during-pregnancy>
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Educational inclusion does not mean this medication or its indications are treated at this practice. Review the guide for your exact product with your prescriber or pharmacist.

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