

Tiagabine

Gabitril

An add-on medicine for certain seizures. Your other medicines affect the dose you need.

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

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

TAKE WITH FOOD

DO NOT CHANGE OR STOP IT YOURSELF

Important: tiagabine can cause seizures in people who do not have epilepsy, even at low doses.

What it is used for

Tiagabine is approved with other medicines for focal seizures in adults and children age 12 and older. It is not a cure for epilepsy.

It is not approved for anxiety, sleep problems or pain, and benefit for these uses is uncertain. If prescribed for another reason, ask about the evidence and seizure risk.

How it works

It slows the recycling of GABA, a chemical messenger that helps quiet nerve activity. This may help limit the spread of some seizure signals.

That mechanism does not prove it treats anxiety. More is not necessarily better: extra doses can be dangerous, and your treatment needs an individual plan.

What to expect over time

STARTING

The dose begins low. Sleepiness or dizziness may appear early.

DOSE CHANGES

Increases are gradual, usually no more often than weekly.

FOLLOW-UP

Track seizures and how clearly you think, move and feel.

Taking your medication

Take each dose with food at the times on your prescription. Treatment often starts once daily, then uses two to four daily doses.

Do not combine the day's doses at bedtime or increase the amount yourself. The right dose depends on your other medicines and liver function.

Plan refills ahead. If several doses are missed, contact your prescriber before restarting: you may need to build the dose up again.

When to get help

Call 911: a first seizure, a seizure lasting over five minutes, repeated seizures without recovery, breathing trouble or inability to wake. Follow your rescue plan if provided.

Get urgent assessment: new staring spells, severe confusion, poor responsiveness, marked weakness, or a blistering rash with mouth sores or fever.

Contact your team immediately: new suicidal thoughts, major mood changes, new rash or vision changes. Call 911 if you are in immediate danger.

Early side effects

Dizziness, sleepiness, tremor and nausea can occur. Driving and hazardous work must wait until your response and seizure plan allow them.

Other effects to discuss

Report concentration, word-finding, irritability or appetite/weight changes that affect daily life. Sudden confusion is not something to sleep off.

What to keep track of

Track seizures, thinking, balance and mood. Review all medicine changes with your team. Routine drug levels are usually unnecessary; tests depend on your situation.

Before you start

Tell your team about liver disease, past prolonged seizures, depression, suicidal thoughts, vision problems, allergies and all medicines or supplements. Discuss pregnancy plans and breastfeeding before treatment. Human pregnancy and nursing information is limited. If pregnancy occurs, contact your team promptly without suddenly stopping your seizure medicine. Ask about the antiseizure-medicine pregnancy registry.

Medicines & interactions

Other seizure medicines

Some make your body clear tiagabine faster. Starting, stopping or changing them may require a tiagabine dose change. Let your team manage the whole regimen.

Alcohol & sedatives

Alcohol, opioids, sleep medicines and other sedating drugs can worsen impairment. Avoid alcohol and ask before adding anything that makes you sleepy.

Psychiatric medicines

Some antidepressants, antipsychotics and stimulants can add seizure risk. Do not stop them yourself; have your prescriber check the combination.

Supplements & new medicines

St John's wort can change tiagabine levels. Check new prescriptions, nonprescription drugs and supplements with your pharmacist; ask about grapefruit too.

Everyday tips

Use reminders and take doses with planned meals.

Record seizures, missed doses and side effects.

Give someone you trust your seizure first-aid plan.

Discuss problems early; do not adjust doses alone.

Your questions, answered

What if I miss one dose?

Take it when remembered unless nearly time for the next dose; then skip it. Never double. More than one missed dose means calling your prescriber for restart instructions.

Can I stop when I feel better?

Do not stop suddenly. Your team will plan a gradual reduction when appropriate. A severe reaction or new seizure needs urgent assessment and specific instructions.

Why is my dose lower than someone else's?

Some medicines make your body clear tiagabine faster. The same dose can produce very different blood levels, so larger doses are not appropriate for everyone.

Can a seizure medicine cause seizures?

Yes. Tiagabine has caused new seizures in people without epilepsy, including at low doses. If you take it for another reason, discuss that risk and alternatives.

Storage & safety

Keep tablets in their original, closed container at room temperature, protected from light and moisture, away from children and pets. Never share. For an overdose, call Poison Control at 1-800-222-1222 immediately; call 911 for seizures, collapse, breathing trouble 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/drugInfo.cfm?setid=953ef3cc-e3cb-480f-b9ea-256520fd62b8>
 2. <https://medlineplus.gov/druginfo/meds/a698014.html>
 3. <https://www.aedpregnancyregistry.org/>
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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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