



Gloucestershire Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Pregabalin following pharyngectomy

Introduction

You have been given this leaflet as you are undergoing surgery on your throat (pharynx). You will be provided with a separate leaflet titled “Pharyngectomy”. If you have not been given one, please ask a member of staff. Due to the nature of this surgery, we expect you to have a sore throat during your recovery. You have been given this leaflet because you have been prescribed a pain medication called pregabalin.

What is pregabalin?

Pregabalin is a medicine used to treat some types of pain. It is especially good at treating nerve pain, which can be common after surgery to the throat (pharynx). It belongs to a group of medications called anticonvulsants, which are also used to treat epilepsy as well as pain.

How should I take pregabalin?

Swallow capsules/tablets whole with a drink of water or juice. Do not chew them. You can take pregabalin with or without food. Try to space your doses evenly throughout the day. Regular doses result in the best control and recovery of normal functions.

Daily pregabalin doses are usually prescribed for the 14 days after your operation. The dose is usually 75mg or 25mg, to be taken twice a day.

What if I forget to take it?

If you forget a dose, take it as soon as you remember. If it is nearly time for your next dose (within two hours), skip the missed dose and take the next one at the usual time. Never take two doses at the same time or take an extra dose to make up for a forgotten one.

What if I take too much?

Taking too much pregabalin can cause serious side effects. Contact 111 for advice if you think you have taken more than your prescribed dose of pregabalin. Go to the Emergency Department if:

- you feel dizzy or sleepy
- you feel confused or agitated
- you have a seizure
- you pass out (faint)

Common side-effects

- Headaches
- Tiredness or feeling sleepy
- Dizziness
- Diarrhoea
- Mood changes
- Feeling sick
- Swollen limbs (hands, arms, legs or feet)
- Blurred vision
- Weight gain
- Memory problems

Most side effects are mild and usually get better after a few days. Keep taking pregabalin unless the side effects

are severe. If you have these side effects and they are severe, contact your doctor or pharmacist for advice.

Uncommon or Rare side-effects

- Severe dizziness
- Passing out
- Hallucinations
- Blood in your urine
- Passing urine more often
- Constipation
- Thoughts of self-harm

If any of these side effects occur, stop taking pregabalin and contact your doctor or 111 straight away.

A short course of pregabalin (e.g. 14 days) can very rarely cause addiction. Some people feel anxious if they miss a dose or take more than prescribed to try to help their symptoms. If you are worried about this, talk to your doctor.

Can I drink alcohol?

Alcohol increases the sedative effects (feeling sleepy) of pregabalin. It is best not to drink alcohol when taking it.

Can I drive?

Pregabalin may cause drowsiness. If you feel tired, do not drive and wait until you feel alert.

More information

Further information can be found on the NHS and British Pain Society websites:

- <https://www.nhs.uk/medicines/pregabalin/>
- <https://fpm.ac.uk/sites/fpm/files/documents/2022-09/Pregabalin-leaflet-2022.pdf>

Content reviewed: December 2025

Shared Decision Making

If you are asked to make a choice, you may have lots of questions that you want to ask. You may also want to talk over your options with your family or friends. It can help to write a list of the questions you want answered and take it to your appointment.

Ask 3 Questions

To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions if you asked to make a choice about your healthcare.

1. What are my options?
2. What are the pros and cons of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?



These resources have been adapted with kind permission from the MAGIC Programme, supported by the Health Foundation.

***Ask 3 Questions** is based on Shepherd HL, et al. Three questions that patients can ask to improve the quality of information physicians give about treatment options: A cross-over trial. Patient Education and Counselling, 2011;84: 379-85



<https://aqua.nhs.uk/resources/shared-decision-making-case-studies/>



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GHPI1934_12_25
Department: ENT
Review due: December 2028
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