Plumb's Drug Handouts

Gabapentin

(*gab-ah-**pen**-tin*)

Key Information

- This medication may be useful for treatment of anxiety, pain, and seizures.
- May be given with or without food. Giving with food may help prevent stomach upset.
- Do not give within 2 hours of antacids or with food containing high amounts of calcium.
- If giving an oral liquid made for humans, make sure it does not contain the sweetener xylitol. Xylitol is toxic to dogs.
- Drowsiness and loss of coordination are the most common side effects.
- This medication is a controlled substance in some states.
  - Store it in a secure spot out of sight.
  - It must only be used in the animal it was prescribed for. It is illegal to give or sell it to anyone else.

Note: The purpose of this information sheet is to answer commonly asked questions. It does not contain all available information for this medication and is not a substitute for medical advice provided by your veterinary healthcare team.

Description	• Medication with anti-seizure, pain-relieving, and anxiety-reducing effects • Available as tablets, capsules, and oral solutions
Other common names	*Neurontin*
Uses	This medication is not FDA approved specifically for animals, but it is approved for use in humans. At the discretion of your veterinarian, this medication may be used extra-label for the treatment of: • Anxiety in dogs and cats • Pain in dogs, cats, and other species • Seizures in dogs and cats
Before this medication is given	No medication is 100% safe in all patients. Discuss with your veterinarian: • Any other medications or supplements your animal is taking • Any conditions or diseases your animal has now or has had in the past • Any side effects your animal has had to medications in the past • The risks of using this medication if your animal is pregnant or nursing
Warnings for animals	**NOTE: Some oral liquids made for humans may contain the sweetener xylitol. Xylitol is toxic to dogs and should not be used in this species.** Do **not** use: • In animals that are allergic to it or similar drugs, like pregabalin Use with **caution** in: • Patients that have kidney disease • Service or working animals • Animals that are pregnant, nursing, or intended for breeding Certain medications are not allowed in some animal competitions. Check rules and regulations when your animal is taking a medication.
Warnings for humans	• Wash your hands after handling any medication. • This medication is a controlled substance in some states. It must only be used in the animal it was prescribed for. It is illegal to give or sell it to anyone else.
How do I give this medication?	• Give with or without food. Giving with food may help prevent stomach upset.

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	• If using a liquid, measure with an oral syringe, medicine cup, or dosing spoon. Do not use household measuring devices. • Do not give oral antacids, including milk of magnesia or aluminum hydroxide, within 2 hours of giving gabapentin. Antacids can reduce the amount of gabapentin absorbed. • Do not give gabapentin with food containing high amounts of calcium, like cheese or other dairy products. These products can reduce the amount of gabapentin absorbed. *Give exactly as your veterinarian has prescribed. Always follow the instructions on the prescription label.*
Side effects	**Common** – contact your veterinarian if any of these signs are severe, continue to occur, or worsen over time: • Drowsiness or lack of energy • Uncoordinated movement **Severe** – stop the medication and contact your veterinarian immediately if you notice any of these signs: • Extreme sedation
How will I know it's working?	• If using for anxiety, your animal should appear calmer within 1 to 2 hours. • If using for pain, you may see some improvement in your animal's signs within the first few days or weeks, but it can take several weeks to reach its full effect. • If using for seizures, it should begin having an effect within the first couple weeks. It may take several weeks to determine how well it's working. Contact your veterinary clinic if your animal's signs worsen or do not improve.
How long will the medication effects last?	• This medication will stop working within 24 hours of the last dose. • It may last longer if your animal has reduced kidney or liver function.
How long do I give it for?	This medication can be given for different lengths of time. Give it for as long as your veterinarian tells you. You may need to refill the prescription. If this medication is used for seizures or has been given for a long time, it needs to be discontinued gradually over time. • Stopping it suddenly can cause seizures, vomiting, or pain. • Talk with your veterinarian before stopping it.
Overdose	Overdoses of gabapentin can cause drowsiness, loss of coordination, and diarrhea. Overdoses of liquid products for humans that contain xylitol can cause life threatening drops in blood sugar levels and liver damage. If you witness or suspect an overdose, call your veterinarian or an animal-specific poison control center (consultation fee applies): • **ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center**: (888) 426-4435 • **Pet Poison Helpline**: (855) 764-7661 *Have the product or label with you if possible.*
Missed dose	In most cases, if you miss a dose: • Give it when you remember, then return to the regular dosing schedule. If it is close to the time for the next dose: • Skip the missed dose. • Give the next dose at the next scheduled time. • Continue the regular dosing schedule. *If you are unsure, call your veterinary clinic. Do not double-up or give extra doses.*
Storage	• Store tablets and capsules in original container at room temperature. • Store oral liquids in the refrigerator.

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	• Keep out of reach of children and animals. • Because this medication is a controlled substance in some states, store it in a secure spot that is out of sight.
Disposal	Because this medication is a controlled substance in some states, dispose of any unused medication as soon as possible. Do **not** flush this medication down the toilet or wash down the sink. Options for disposing of unused or expired medications include: • Drug take-back sites: This is preferred whenever possible. To find a site near you, contact your local law enforcement or waste management authorities. • Home disposal: Mix the medication in with coffee grounds or kitty litter, seal in a plastic bag, and throw away in the trash. *Do **not** save leftover medication or give it to others to use.*
Questions?	Talk to your veterinarian.

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