

## Medication Information

### Neurontin

Neurontin (gabapentin) belongs to a group of medications called anticonvulsants that are used to treat seizure disorders. In psychiatry, it is used to stabilize mood swings and treat anxiety. It is also helpful in controlling chronic pain. The usual daily dose is 900-2,400 mg.

**Precautions:** Neurontin must be taken on a regular basis to be of benefit and should not be discontinued suddenly. Do not take it within 2 hours of an antacid. It is best to avoid any use of alcohol or street drugs when taking this medication. If there is a possibility you may become pregnant or breast feed, consult with your physician. Because Neurontin can cause drowsiness, dizziness, or blurred vision, do not drive or operate heavy machinery until you know how you will be affected.

**Common side effects include:** drowsiness, balance problems, dizziness, nausea, heartburn, weight gain, irritability, and blurred vision. Other adverse effects not listed here may occur. Contact your physician if you develop any unusual or disturbing symptoms.

**Alternative Treatments:** Other mood stabilizers include: Lithium, Depakote, Tegretol, Trileptal, Topomax, Lamictal, Gabitril, and atypical antipsychotics. Other medications used to treat anxiety include selective serotonin inhibitors (SSRIs), benzodiazepines, tricyclic antidepressants (TCAs), Buspar, beta-blockers, and low doses of antipsychotic medications. Certain "natural" substances have been found helpful in some people with milder anxiety (such as St John's Wort, 5-HTP, GABA, L-glutamine, Valerian root, Kava Kava), and omega 3 fatty acids may modulate mild mood swings. These are not as well studied, may be manufactured with less quality control, can cause adverse reactions, and are usually less predictably effective than medications. Various forms of psychotherapy are also often beneficial. Left untreated, mood and anxiety disorders tend to become more severe and chronic.