

Appendix 3a: Patient information leaflet – Reviewing your gabapentin or pregabalin for pain

Why review my medicine?

It is important to review your medicine regularly to make sure it is still helping and not causing problems. This review will help you and your healthcare worker to decide if you should continue taking, change, reduce, or stop taking your medicine.

Why is it important to attend my review appointments?

If you are not reviewed, your healthcare worker may not have enough information to decide whether it is safe and appropriate to continue prescribing this medicine.

If you are unable to attend, please let your healthcare team know so another appointment can be arranged.

What will we discuss at my review?

- How the medicine might be helping your pain.
- Any unwanted effects (side effects) caused by the medicine.
- How you are feeling in general (such as: your mood, sleeping, memory, energy levels).
- If the medicine is helping you do day-to-day activities more easily, such as walking a bit further, managing household tasks or doing more of the things you enjoy.
- If your dose is right for you.
- If you have had any problems taking your medicine (like forgetting doses or feeling drowsy).
- If it is still safe and helpful for you to carry on taking your medicine.

How do I know if the medicine is working?

Gabapentin or pregabalin may help reduce pain but don't remove it completely. When reviewing the medicine, it is important to look at function as well as pain. For example:

- Are you able to move around more easily?
- Are you able to get back to a hobby?
- Are you managing daily tasks more easily?

If you notice an improvement in what you are able to do, you and your healthcare worker will agree whether to continue the medicine at the same dose, change the dose, or try to gradually reduce the dose to see if you still need it.

What if the medicine isn't helping?

If your pain hasn't improved and you haven't noticed any change in what you can do, the medicine may not be right for you.

You and your healthcare worker may decide to reduce the dose or stop it. This is usually done gradually to see if you still need it and to avoid side effects.

Can I stop taking this medicine straight away?

No. If you suddenly stop taking your medicine, you may feel unwell because you are experiencing withdrawal symptoms. This can happen because your body has got used to the medicine. You may feel anxious, have a headache, feel sick, sweat more, or have flu-like symptoms.

What else can help with my pain?

Medicines are only one part of managing long-term pain. Staying active, taking gentle exercise and having a healthy lifestyle can all help you with your pain. Some people find physiotherapy, pain management programmes, or talking therapies helpful. Your healthcare worker can suggest some options that might be suitable for you.

Visit the AWTTTC website for useful links and resources.

What if I have concerns before my next review?

If your pain gets worse, or if you feel the medicine is causing problems, tell your GP, nurse, pharmacist or other healthcare worker. **Do not wait until your next review.**