

Pregabalin (Lyrica)

Pregabalin (Lyrica) is a GABA analog that binds to the nerve terminals of calcium channels and prevent calcium influx. This action inhibits the release of certain neurotransmitters. Pregabalin is indicated for seizures, neuropathic pain, and fibromyalgia. Side effects may include dizziness, somnolence, weight gain, headache, and angioedema. The patient should be warned about increased risks of developing rhabdomyolysis or drug dependence.



PLAY PICMONIC

Mechanism

GABA Analog

[GABA-goose On-a-log](#)

By binding to calcium channels on the nerve terminals, pregabalin inhibits calcium influx and decreases the release of glutamate, norepinephrine, and substance P. Although the exact mechanism of action remains unknown, a decrease in these neurotransmitters help control seizures and provide relief of neuropathic pain. Although pregabalin is a GABA analog, this drug does not enhance GABA's inhibitory actions.

Indications

Seizures

[Caesar](#)

Although the exact mechanism of action remains unknown, pregabalin decreases seizure by decreasing abnormal electrical activity in the brain. Instruct the patient to continue taking this medication even if they are feeling fine.

Neuropathic Pain

[Neuron-extremities with Pain-bolt](#)

Pregabalin (Lyrica) alters chemicals in the brain responsible for transmitting pain signals across the nervous system and decreases neuropathic pain. The medication is used to treat diabetic neuropathy associated with nerve damage (refer to the Picmonic on Diabetes Assessment). The drug also helps relieve neuropathic pain associated with spinal cord injury caused by the herpes zoster virus. Patients with fibromyalgia may also experience neuropathic pain relief while taking pregabalin.

Fibromyalgia

[Fablo-mayo-algae](#)

A small percentage of patients with fibromyalgia, a chronic health condition causing generalized muscle pain and fatigue, experience decreased levels in pain while taking pregabalin. However, a majority of these patients report decreased pain relief within months of therapy.

Side Effects

Headache

Head-egg-lump

A small percentage of patients taking pregabalin experience headaches. The abrupt discontinuation of the drug may also cause headaches and should be consulted with the health care provider.

Dizziness

Dizzy-eyes

Dizziness is a common side effect of pregabalin that may decrease with continued use. Instruct the patient to avoid driving while taking the medication.

Somnolence (Fatigue)

Sleepy-guy

Somnolence, characterized by constant fatigue, is a common side effect of pregabalin. After discontinuing this medication, symptoms of constant tiredness should disappear. Instruct the patient to avoid hazardous activity such as driving.

Weight Gain

Up-arrow Scale

Pregabalin causes weight gain in a small percentage of patients. This medication may cause an increase of 7% or more in body weight in just a few months.

Angioedema

Angel-edamame

Angioedema, a rapid swelling of the face, tongue, lips, throat, and larynx, is caused by hypersensitivity reactions. A small percentage of patients have reported allergic-type symptoms, including angioedema, while taking pregabalin. If symptoms occur, immediately contact the healthcare provider.

Rhabdomyolysis

Rabbi-muscle-lights

Although rhabdomyolysis has not been clearly associated with pregabalin, the patient should be instructed to report muscle pain, tenderness, or weakness to the healthcare provider. Suspected symptoms of rhabdomyolysis warrants discontinuation of the drug.

Considerations

Dependence

Dependence Ball-and-chain

Since a small percentage of patients taking pregabalin experienced euphoria, this medication has a risk of abuse and dependency in patients seeking pain relief. The medication is classified under Schedule V of the Drug Enforcement Agency's Controlled Substances Act.