



PREGABALIN FACTSHEET FOR CLIENTS

Pregabalin, better known as Lyrica®, is medicine prescribed for nerve pain, epilepsy and anxiety. It comes in capsules in doses of 25mg, 75mg, 150mg and 300mg.

Effects

As well as reducing pain, pregabalin has similar effects to benzos. Some of the effects are wanted and some are unwanted. Pregabalin is sometimes used to increase the effects of other drugs like opioids or alcohol, but this increases the risk of overdosing. Pregabalin's possible effects include:

Sedation	Drunk effect
Euphoria	Relaxation and calm
Hallucinations	Lowered inhibitions
Fits/seizures	Blurred vision
Constipation	Vomiting
Trouble sleeping	Psychosis
Tremors	Swollen limbs
Depression or anxiety	
Confusion and memory impairment	
Suicidal thoughts (in a small number of people)	

Overdose risk

Pregabalin can cause respiratory depression. If it's used with other drugs that slow your respiratory system, it can cause your breathing to become dangerously slow or stop. Overdose can cause coma or death.

Naloxone **won't work** on pregabalin, but it will reverse the effects of opioids if you're using them too. If someone drops on pregabalin and opioids, taking the opioids out of the picture might be

enough to get them breathing again. **Always call for emergency help if someone drops – 000.**

You should speak to Directline on 1800 888 236 to find how to get naloxone near you.

Dependence

Tolerance and dependence can develop if pregabalin is used regularly, whether prescribed or used off prescription.

It's never a good idea to try to stop or cut down using a drug on your own. The more support you can get, the better your chances of things working out well.

It's a good idea to speak to a doctor or an alcohol and other drug worker before you try to make changes to your drug use, so they can help you manage any withdrawal symptoms you might have.

Withdrawal

It can be dangerous to stop using pregabalin suddenly. You should always speak to a doctor if you are going to stop using it, even if you have been using it without a prescription. Withdrawal can cause a recurrence of the symptoms for which pregabalin was prescribed.

Other withdrawal symptoms include: severe cravings, trouble sleeping, nausea, headaches, seizures, diarrhoea, sweating, tremors and depression.

There are services that can help you consider your drug use and what you can do about it. In Victoria contact:

- DirectLine: 1800 888 236
- Counselling Online: www.counsellingonline.org.au.
- Local alcohol and other drug services.

Reducing the risks:

- Start with a small amount to work out how strongly it will affect you.
- Try not to use more than one drug at a time, including alcohol.
- Don't drive when you're using.
- Don't stop suddenly.
- Avoid injecting pregabalin as it can seriously damage your veins.
- Be aware of your mental health and seek help if anxiety or depression symptoms are new or worsening, or if you are feeling suicidal.

If you are going to inject pregabalin: **PLAN AHEAD**

When you go to the NSP, take extra needles and syringes and sharps containers so you don't get caught short and have to reuse or share.

Be in control of your own drug use. Learn to inject yourself so you don't have to rely on others.

Consider other ways to use - swallowing or via shafting (putting drugs up your bottom).

Always filter. Some things are better to use as a filter than others. A corner of a swab or a part of a tampon is much better than a pre-made cigarette filter which can have harmful particles in it. Wheel filters are the best thing to use to filter out insoluble particles if you're injecting pills.