

## Pregabalin for Trigeminal Neuralgia

*\*A guide for patients\**

---

### What is Pregabalin?

Pregabalin (brand name: Lyrica) is a medication often used to treat nerve pain, including trigeminal neuralgia. While it's not a first-line treatment, it is very effective in 25% of patients and moderately effective in a further 50% who cannot tolerate other medications or need additional pain control. Pregabalin is also used for other types of acute and chronic nerve pain.

### How It Works

Pregabalin works by blocking certain calcium channels, affecting the way nerves send messages in the brain. It doesn't act directly on the trigeminal nerve, but it calms overactive nerve signals by interacting with calcium channels in nerve cells. In plain terms: it lowers the 'chatter' between nerves that might be misfiring and causing pain.

### Typical Dosing and Escalation

- Starting dose: Usually 25 mg to 75 mg at bedtime.
- Tablet sizes: 25 mg to 300 mg in multiple increasing doses
- Dose escalation: The dose is increased approximately every 7 days to minimize side effects, often adding one dose at a time (morning or evening), though sometimes both.
- Target dose: Most people don't experience significant pain relief until a dose of 150 mg per day, though often require 300 mg per day, divided into 2 or 3 doses. Sometimes 600 mg per day is needed. The dose is tailored to each patient based on how well it works and what side effects occur.
- Pregabalin may take a few days or weeks to have its maximal effect
- Always follow your doctor's instructions. Never change the dose or stop the medication without medical advice.

### Common Side Effects

Pregabalin is reasonably well-tolerated, often with side effects self-resolving in time, but may include:

- Drowsiness or fatigue (especially to begin)
- Dizziness or light headedness
- Blurred vision
- Weight gain or swelling in the hands or feet
- Difficulty concentrating or memory issues

- Like most of the medications used to treat trigeminal neuralgia, pregabalin may be teratogenic (Category D) and must be strictly avoided in pregnancy.

## Important Tips

- Take with or without food.
- Take consistently and do not skip doses.
- Avoid alcohol, driving or operating heavy machinery until you know how it affects you.
- If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember — but skip it if it's almost time for the next one.
- Do not stop suddenly — this can cause withdrawal symptoms.
- Inform your doctor of all other medications and supplements.

## Final Word

Pregabalin can be a helpful option in managing trigeminal neuralgia, especially for those who cannot tolerate the first line drugs carbamazepine and oxcarbazepine. Its effects build over time, so patience and careful dose adjustments are important. The key is to start low, go slow, and stay in touch with your care team about how you're feeling.

If you have any questions or concerns, don't hesitate to reach out.