

# GABAPENTIN AND DOGS – Stuff You Should Know

GABAPENTIN is known as "Neurontin" in people-medicine.

GABAPENTIN Can be used for the following therapies:

- 1) Pain (Soft tissue and spinal)
- 2) Pain (Bone / osteoarthritis)
- 3) Anti-convulsant therapy. (Pets with rare seizures or adjunctive to other meds)
- 4) Tremors in extremities
- 5) Nighttime pacing and anxiety in elderly dogs.
- 6) Sleep aid

## How Safe Is Gabapentin?

To administer enough to endanger a mouse, you must give one THOUSAND milligrams per kilogram.

Gabapentin is a VERY safe medication. Unlike other anticonvulsants and pain medications, the patient does not require serial blood tests to assess organ function on the medication.

	Often Used Alone	Combinations	Used "To Effect" or "As Needed"	Used Morning, Night or Twice a day.	Try to Titrate Up
Soft tissue and spinal pain	No	Yes	No	Twice	Yes
Bone & Arthritic Pain	No	Yes	Decided by case	Twice	Yes
Anti-convulsant	Yes	Decided by case	No	Decided by case	No
Tremors	Yes	Decided by case	Yes	Decided by case	No
Pacing / Anxiety	Yes	Decided by case	Yes	Night	No
Sleep Aid	Yes	No	Yes	Night	No

## Generalities About Gabapentin

- 1) In general, Gabapentin is used with two other medications when attacking PAIN. Those two medications would be an anti-inflammatory like a COX2 Inhibitor (Deramax / Celebrex), and a pain reducer like Tramadol.
- 2) In general, for pain, we like to titrate up to the highest tolerable dose we can get that does NOT cause mental "vacancy" effects. (The lights are on but no one's home)
- 3) In general, for tremors, anxiety or as an anticonvulsant benefits, we start with the lowest published dose and slowly increase the dose until the desired effect is achieved. We do not try to give the maximum tolerable amount. We try for the minimum-effective dose.

A dog may show *intolerance* to Gabapentin but that can be compensated. They get "used to the medicine" relatively quickly, but in the meantime, we can see mental "vacancy" effects. (The lights are on but no one's home) To compensate this, we administer the medication by way of titration, or *slow-increase*. It is very definitely worth it, for bone and spinal pain.

## Titration.

Titration is usually easy in dogs over 40 pounds. Typically we would start at 100mg twice a day and then increase by 100mg twice per day every 1-2 weeks.

In dogs smaller than 40 pounds, titration is the *only* way to use Gabapentin and takes a while.

FOR SMALL DOGS: Once a day PM dosing is one way to titrate up to a higher dose. You can dose more and more heavily at night, when sleepiness is acceptable; increasing the dose as prescribed until it's decided that it's okay to dose Gabapentin in the morning. Then you can gradually increase the morning dose until it equals the evening dose.