



## Jeff Donovan MD PhD FRCPC

*Dermatologist, specializing in hair loss*

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### INFORMATION ON ORAL GABAPENTIN

#### What is GABAPENTIN?

- This is a type of anti-seizure medication which blocks nerves. It can also reduce itching, pain, burning
- The most common side effects are dizziness, drowsiness and lower extremity swelling

#### How is GABAPENTIN prescribed?

*Please use as follows:* \_\_\_\_\_

- The medicine is available as 300 mg tablets (although rarely 100 mg tabs are used 3 times daily).
- Check with Dr. Donovan exactly how he would like you to use this medication.
- Frequently, it is used 300 mg at night for three nights then 300 mg twice daily (morning and night) for 3 more days and then 300 mg three times per day for next 8 days. Then starting week 3, go up to 600 mg twice daily and then in week 4 go up to 600 mg three times per day (1800 mg per day total).
- The maximum dose is 3600 mg/ day (or 1200 mg 3 times/ day).
- DO NOT STOP GABAPENTIN SUDDENLY. It needs to be decreased slowly.

#### What conditions will GABAPENTIN be used for?

- Gabapentin is used for seizure disorders but can also be used for skin and scalp itching, Pain disorders, Pain after shingles, Scalp Burning

#### Who will not be prescribed GABAPENTIN?

1. Someone with allergy to the drug
2. Women trying to become pregnant

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### What are the side effects of GABAPENTIN?

- SUICIDAL THOUGHTS and BEHAVIOURS are rare but will be discussed.
- dizziness, sleepiness, drowsiness,
- Palpitations, chest tightness, swelling in legs
- nausea (take with food), dry mouth, gastric discomfort diarrhea or constipation
- increased blood pressure, headaches, changes in appetite.
- Blotchy rash
- Increased serum creatinine (CK)

### Is any blood work needed while taking GABAPENTIN?

We also recommend a blood test for CK at baseline and month 2

### What type of monitoring is needed while taking GABAPENTIN?

A baseline blood test is required. Follow up blood pressure assessments will be needed at the end of month 1, month 2 and month 3. These blood pressure assessments can either be done

- 1) by our nurses or Dr. Donovan by coming into the office for a 1 minute quick follow up (a booked appointment is required)
- 2) by the patient himself or herself at home (using an at home blood pressure machine) with results emailed or called into our office
- 3) by your family doctor with results emailed or called into our office
- 4) at a local pharmacy (using a machine at the pharmacy).

BASELINE READING \_\_\_\_\_

MONTH 1 READING \_\_\_\_\_

MONTH 2 READING \_\_\_\_\_

MONTH 3 READING \_\_\_\_\_

- 5) We also recommend a blood test for CK at baseline and month 2