

Gabapentin effective for some patients with chronic neuropathic pain

Clinical Question	How effective is gabapentin for chronic neuropathic pain in adults?
Bottom Line	<p>Gabapentin at doses of 1800 mg to 3600 mg daily provided good levels of pain relief (at least 50% reduction over baseline) to some people with postherpetic neuralgia and peripheral diabetic neuropathy. Evidence for other types of neuropathic pain was very limited. In pain after shingles, three in 10 people had pain reduced by half or more with gabapentin and two in 10 with placebo. Pain was reduced by a third or more for five in 10 with gabapentin and three in 10 with placebo. In pain caused by diabetes, four in 10 people had pain reduced by half or more with gabapentin and two in 10 with placebo. Pain was reduced by a third or more for five in 10 with gabapentin and four in 10 with placebo. Over half of those treated with gabapentin did not have worthwhile pain relief but experienced adverse events.</p>
Caveat	Study duration was typically four to 12 weeks. It was not possible to know beforehand who would benefit and who would not.
Context	Neuropathic pain is characterised by pain in the absence of a noxious stimulus, or where minor or moderate nociceptive stimuli evoke exaggerated levels of pain. Gabapentin is commonly used to treat neuropathic pain.
Cochrane Systematic Review	<p>Wiffen PJ et al. Gabapentin for chronic neuropathic pain in adults. Cochrane Reviews, 2017, Issue 6. Art. No.: CD007938.DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD007938.pub4. This review contains 37 studies involving 5,914 participants.</p>
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