

Tegretol

Generic Name: [carbamazepine](#) (oral) (kar ba MAZ e peen)

Brand Names: Carbatrol, Epitol, Equetrol, TEGretol, TEGretol XR

REVIEWED

By Chris Tighe at 1:55 pm, May 18, 2016

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What is Tegretol?

Tegretol (carbamazepine) is an anticonvulsant. It works by decreasing nerve impulses that cause seizures and pain.

Tegretol is used to treat certain types of [seizures](#) ([partial](#), tonic-clonic, mixed).

Tegretol is also used to treat nerve pain such as [trigeminal neuralgia](#) and glossopharyngeal neuralgia.

Important information

You should not take Tegretol if you have a history of bone marrow suppression, or if you are allergic to carbamazepine or to an antidepressant such as amitriptyline, desipramine, doxepin, imipramine, or nortriptyline.

TELL YOUR DOCTOR ABOUT ALL OTHER MEDICINES YOU USE. Some drugs can raise or lower your blood levels of Tegretol, which may cause side effects or make carbamazepine less effective. Carbamazepine can also affect blood levels of certain other drugs, making them less effective or increasing side effects.

Tegretol may cause serious blood problems or a life-threatening skin rash. **Call your doctor if you have a fever, unusual weakness, bleeding, or a skin rash (no matter how mild).**

Do not stop taking Tegretol without asking your doctor first, even if you feel fine.

If you are pregnant, do not start or stop taking Tegretol without your doctor's advice.

Before taking this medicine

You should not take Tegretol if you have a history of bone marrow suppression, or if you are allergic to carbamazepine or to an antidepressant such as amitriptyline, desipramine, doxepin, imipramine, or nortriptyline.

Do not use Tegretol if you have taken an MAO inhibitor in the past 14 days. A dangerous drug interaction could occur. MAO inhibitors include furazolidone, isocarboxazid, linezolid, phenelzine, rasagiline, selegiline, and tranylcypromine.

Tegretol may cause severe or life-threatening skin rash, and especially in people of Asian ancestry. Your doctor may recommend a blood test before you start the medication to determine your risk.

To make sure this medicine is safe for you, tell your doctor if you have any of these conditions:

- heart disease, high blood pressure, high cholesterol or triglycerides;
- liver or kidney disease;
- glaucoma;
- a thyroid disorder;
- lupus;
- porphyria; or
- a history of mental illness, psychosis, or suicidal thoughts or actions.

You may have thoughts about suicide while taking Tegretol. Tell your doctor if you have symptoms of depression or suicidal thoughts. Your family or other caregivers should also be alert to changes in your mood or symptoms.

Follow your doctor's instructions about taking seizure medication if you are pregnant. **Do not start or stop taking this medicine without your doctor's advice, and tell your doctor right away if you become pregnant.** Tegretol may cause harm to an unborn baby, but having a seizure during pregnancy could harm both mother and baby. The benefit of preventing seizures may outweigh any risks to the baby.



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Tegretol can make birth control pills or implants less effective. Use a barrier form of birth control (such as a condom or diaphragm with spermicide) **to prevent pregnancy** while taking Tegretol.

Carbamazepine can pass into breast milk and may harm a nursing baby. You should not breast-feed while you are using Tegretol.

How should I take Tegretol?

Take Tegretol exactly as prescribed by your doctor. Follow all directions on your prescription label. Your doctor may occasionally change your dose to make sure you get the best results. Do not take this medicine in larger or smaller amounts or for longer than recommended.

Do not crush, chew, break, or open an **extended-release tablet**. Swallow the tablet whole.

Shake the **Tegretol oral suspension (liquid)** well just before you measure a dose. Measure the liquid with a special dose-measuring spoon or medicine cup, not with a regular table spoon. If you do not have a dose-measuring device, ask your pharmacist for one.

The chewable tablet must be chewed before you swallow it.

It may take up to 4 weeks before your symptoms improve. Keep using the medication as directed and **call your doctor promptly if this medicine seems to stop working as well in preventing your seizures**.

While using Tegretol, you may need frequent blood tests at your doctor's office.

Do not stop taking Tegretol without asking your doctor first, even if you feel fine. You may have increased seizures or unpleasant withdrawal symptoms if you stop using Tegretol suddenly.

Store at room temperature away from moisture, heat, and light.

See also: [Dosage Information \(in more detail\)](#)

What happens if I miss a dose?

Take the missed dose as soon as you remember. Skip the missed dose if it is almost time for your next scheduled dose. Do not take extra medicine to make up the missed dose.

What happens if I overdose?

Seek emergency medical attention or call the Poison Help line at 1-800-222-1222.

What should I avoid while taking Tegretol?

Tegretol may impair your thinking or reactions. Be careful if you drive or do anything that requires you to be alert.

Drinking alcohol can increase some of the side effects of Tegretol, and can also increase your risk of seizures.

Avoid exposure to sunlight or tanning beds. Tegretol can make you sunburn more easily. Wear protective clothing and use sunscreen (SPF 30 or higher) when you are outdoors.

Grapefruit and grapefruit juice may interact with carbamazepine and lead to unwanted side effects. Discuss the use of grapefruit products with your doctor.

Tegretol side effects

Get emergency medical help if you have **signs of an allergic reaction to Tegretol**: hives; difficulty breathing; swelling of your face, lips, tongue, or throat.

Report any new or worsening symptoms to your doctor, such as: sudden mood or behavior changes, depression, anxiety, insomnia, or if you feel agitated, hostile, restless, irritable, or have thoughts about suicide or hurting yourself.

Call your doctor at once if you have:

- the first sign of any skin rash, no matter how mild;
- slow, fast, or pounding heartbeats;
- feeling light-headed or short of breath;
- blood problems - sudden weakness or ill feeling, fever, chills, pale skin, sore throat, bleeding gums, nosebleeds;
- liver problems - nausea, upper stomach pain, itching, tiredness, loss of appetite, dark urine, clay-colored stools, jaundice (yellowing of the skin or eyes);
- low levels of sodium in the body - headache, confusion, slurred speech, severe weakness, feeling unsteady;
- severe skin reaction - fever, sore throat, swelling in your face or tongue, burning in your eyes, skin pain followed by a red or purple skin rash that spreads (especially in the face or upper body) and causes blistering and peeling.

Common Tegretol side effects may include:

- dizziness, loss of coordination, problems with walking;
- nausea, vomiting; or
- drowsiness.

This is not a complete list of side effects and others may occur. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

See also: [Side effects \(in more detail\)](#)

Tegretol dosing information

Usual Adult Dose of Tegretol for Epilepsy:

Initial dose: 200 mg orally 2 times a day (immediate and extended release) or 100 mg orally 4 times a day (suspension)
Increase dose at weekly intervals by adding up to 200 mg/day using a 2 times a day regimen of extended release or a 3 times a day or 4 times a day regimen of the other formulations.

Maintenance dose: 800 to 1200 mg/day.

Dosage generally should not exceed 1200 mg/day.

However, doses up to 1600 mg/day have been used in rare instances.

Use: Epilepsy:

- Partial seizures with complex symptomatology (psychomotor, temporal lobe)
- Generalized tonic-clonic seizures (grand mal)
- Mixed seizure patterns which include the above, or other partial or generalized seizures

Usual Adult Dose of Tegretol for Trigeminal Neuralgia:

-Initial dose: 100 mg orally 2 times a day (immediate or extended release) or 50 mg orally 4 times a day (suspension)

-May increase by up to 200 mg per day using increments of 100 mg every 12 hours (immediate or extended release), or 50 mg 4 times a day (suspension), only as needed to achieve freedom from pain. Do not exceed 1200 mg per day.

-Maintenance dose: 400 to 800 mg per day

Comments:

-Some patients may be maintained on as little as 200 mg per day while others may require as much as 1200 mg per day.

-At least once every 3 months throughout the treatment period, attempts should be made to reduce the dose to the minimum effective level or to discontinue the drug.

Use:

- True trigeminal Neuralgia
- Beneficial results have also been reported in glossopharyngeal neuralgia

Usual Pediatric Dose of Tegretol for Epilepsy:

Less than 6 years of age:

-Initial dose: 10 to 20 mg/kg/day orally in 2 to 3 divided doses (tablets) or 4 divided doses (suspension)

-Increase dose at weekly intervals to achieve optimal clinical response administered 3 or 4 times a day.

-Maximum dose: 35 mg/kg/day

-If satisfactory response not achieved, measure plasma levels to determine if in therapeutic range.

-Comments: The manufacturer makes no recommendation regarding the safety of doses above 35 mg/kg/24 hours.

6 to 12 years of age:

-Initial dose: 100 mg orally 2 times a day (immediate or extended release tablets) or 50 mg orally 4 times a day (suspension)

-Increase dose at weekly intervals in 100 mg per day increments using a 2 times a day regimen of extended release or a 3 times a day or 4 times a day regimen of the other formulations.

Maintenance dose: 400 to 800 mg per day

Maximum dose: 1000 mg per day

Greater than 12 years of age:

-Initial dose: 200 mg orally 2 times a day (immediate and extended release) or 100 mg orally 4 times a day (suspension)

-Increase dose at weekly intervals in 200 mg per day increments using a 2 times a day regimen of extended release or a 3 times daily to 4 times daily regimen of the other formulations.

-Maintenance dose: 800 to 1200 mg per day

-Dosage generally should not exceed 1000 mg in children 12 to 15 years and 1200 mg/day in patients older than 15 years.

-Doses up to 1600 mg/day have been used in rare instances.

Use: Epilepsy:

- Partial seizures with complex symptomatology (psychomotor, temporal lobe)
- Generalized tonic-clonic seizures (grand mal)
- Mixed seizure patterns which include the above, or other partial or generalized seizures

What other drugs will affect Tegretol?

Sometimes it is not safe to use certain medications at the same time. Some drugs can raise or lower your blood levels of carbamazepine, which may cause side effects or make Tegretol less effective. Carbamazepine can also affect blood levels of certain other drugs, making them less effective or increasing side effects.

Taking Tegretol with other drugs that make you sleepy or slow your breathing can increase these effects. Ask your doctor before taking Tegretol with a sleeping pill, narcotic pain medicine, muscle relaxer, or medicine for anxiety, depression, or seizures.

Many drugs can interact with carbamazepine. Not all possible interactions are listed here. **TELL YOUR DOCTOR ABOUT ALL OTHER MEDICINES YOU USE**, and any you start or stop using during treatment with Tegretol, especially:

- theophylline;
- birth control pills or hormone replacement therapy;
- an antibiotic, or drugs to treat tuberculosis;
- antifungal medication such as fluconazole or ketoconazole;

- a blood thinner such as warfarin, Coumadin;
- cancer medicines;
- a diuretic or "water pill";
- heart or blood pressure medication;
- HIV or AIDS medications;
- medication to treat depression or mental illness, such as aripiprazole or lithium;
- medicines to prevent organ transplant rejection;
- other seizure medications, such as valproic acid;
- steroid medication; or
- thyroid replacement medication.

This list is not complete and many other drugs can interact with carbamazepine. This includes prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal products. Give a list of all your medicines to any healthcare provider who treats you.

Next → [Side Effects](#)



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- *Other brands:* [Carbatrol](#), [Epitol](#), [Equetro](#)

Professional resources

- [Tegretol \(FDA\)](#)
- [Carbamazepine \(AHFS Monograph\)](#)

Other formulations

- [Tegretol XR](#)

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Where can I get more information?

- Your pharmacist can provide more information about Tegretol.

Remember, keep this and all other medicines out of the reach of children, never share your medicines with others, and use Tegretol only for the indication prescribed.

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DRUG STATUS

Rx

Availability
Prescription only

D

Pregnancy Category
Positive evidence of risk

▼

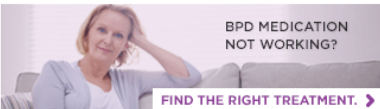
N/A

CSA Schedule
Not a controlled drug

▼

Approval History
Drug history at FDA

▼



Manufacturer
[Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation](#)

Drug Class
[Dibenzazepine anticonvulsants](#)

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7.3/10

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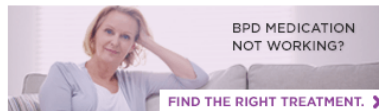
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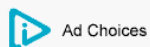
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