

Tegretol (carbamazepine) basics

Treats seizures and epilepsy. Tegretol (carbamazepine) is useful for preventing seizures and relieving certain types of nerve pain, but reduces how well many other medications work.

What to expect when starting

Here's when people typically experience benefits as well as some possible side effects. Your experience may be different.



† Data on frequency of side effects is not available.

Tips from pharmacists

- Take the immediate-release pill with food. Take the extended-release pill with or without food (don't crush, break, or chew).
- You can sprinkle the contents of the capsule on applesauce or other soft food. Swallow right away and follow with water or juice.
- If you're taking the oral suspension, use the measuring device given with the medicine. Don't use your household tablespoons to measure.
- If you're taking the chewable tablet, chew well before swallowing.
- Stopping Tegretol (carbamazepine) suddenly can be very dangerous, and result in loss of seizure control. Talk to your doctor if you are considering stopping Tegretol (carbamazepine).
- Avoid activities that require you to be alert until you know how this drug affects you.

Risks and warnings

The FDA has identified these as possible serious or life-threatening risks with this medication. Contact your doctor if you experience any of these.

Life-threatening skin reactions

Serious, life-threatening skin reactions like toxic epidermal necrolysis (TEN) and Stevens-Johnson syndrome (SJS) can happen at any time while taking Tegretol (carbamazepine). People of Asian descent are more likely to experience these reactions. You may need a genetic test to find out if you have a gene that raises your risk. If you notice a rash or any other skin changes while taking Tegretol (carbamazepine), let your doctor know right away.

Blood disorders

Rarely, Tegretol (carbamazepine) can cause an increased risk for blood disorders. Your blood may be tested regularly to see if it has low white blood cells (for fighting infections) or platelets (for blood clotting). Report any fever, shortness of breath, feeling very tired or weak, any unexplained bruising or bleeding, or purple "splotches" on your skin to your doctor right away.

Suicidal thoughts or behavior

Tegretol (carbamazepine) can raise the risk of suicidal thoughts or behavior as early as 1 week after starting treatment. Call your doctor right away if signs like low mood (depression), nervousness, restlessness, grouching, panic attacks, or changes in mood or actions are new or worse. Report any thoughts of suicide right away.