

ConsumerRx[®]

Medications for Fibromyalgia

What is fibromyalgia?

Fibromyalgia is a chronic pain disorder that affects people physically and mentally. Symptoms include chronic widespread pain, tenderness, sleep problems, fatigue and emotional distress. For people with severe symptoms, fibromyalgia can interfere with basic daily activities.

Can fibromyalgia be treated without medication?

Exercise, muscle strengthening and cognitive behavioral therapy (counseling with a psychiatrist) are considered by many experts to be the foundation of treatment.

What are some of the medications used for the treatment of fibromyalgia?

Generic Medications: ~\$5 - \$36*	Non-Preferred Brand Medications: ~\$154 - \$158*
gabapentin (Neurontin [®]) cyclobenzaprine (Flexeril [®]) Tricyclic antidepressants – amitriptyline (Elavil [®]), amoxapine , clomipramine (Anafranil [®]), desipramine (Norpranil [®]), doxepin (Sinequan [®]), imipramine (Tofranil [®]), nortriptyline (Pamelor [®])	Cymbalta [®] Lyrica [®] Savella [®]

*Brand names in () are non-formulary and are listed for your reference only. *Approximate cost estimates based on a 30-day supply. Actual prices may vary depending on your pharmacy and the amount or strength of medication dispensed.

How effective are the above medications for the treatment of fibromyalgia?

- It is unclear how effective these medications are for treating fibromyalgia. The clinical studies to assess the effectiveness of both the generic and brand-name medications had flaws in their design.
- Although flawed, these studies seem to suggest that medication decreases pain in about 1 in 6 people.

How do the generic medications compare to the brand-name medications?

- Generic and brand-name fibromyalgia medications have never been compared in a study.
- Like gabapentin, Lyrica was first approved for marketing as a seizure medication. Like the tricyclic antidepressants, Cymbalta and Savella were originally studied as antidepressants.
- All of the above medications are recognized for the treatment of fibromyalgia in the medication reference books doctors use.

How does gabapentin (Neurontin[®]) compare to Lyrica?

Gabapentin (Neurontin[®]) and Lyrica are chemically related and work the same way in the body. In a study funded by the National Institute of Health, **gabapentin** (Neurontin[®]) helped to relieve fibromyalgia pain to a similar level as Lyrica.

Why are the generics preferred?

Although the generic medications listed above are not specifically approved by the FDA to be marketed for fibromyalgia, they have proven track records for safety and effectiveness in treating fibromyalgia. They are also recommended for fibromyalgia by national treatment guidelines and provide the best value.

Why are Lyrica, Cymbalta and Savella non-preferred?

These medications are non-preferred because they have never been proven to be better than generic medications for the treatment of fibromyalgia, but they cost more.

What are the common side effects with these medications?

All of these medications cause side effects, even newer medications like Lyrica, Cymbalta and Savella. Talk to your doctor about which medication is best for you.

Side Effect	Lyrica*	Gabapentin*	Cyclobenzaprine	Cymbalta*	Tricyclic Antidepressants	Savella*
Dizziness	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sleepiness	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Nausea				✓	✓	✓
Weight gain	✓				✓	
Decreased Appetite				✓		
Blurry vision	✓				✓	
Dry mouth	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Constipation	✓			✓	✓	✓
Insomnia						✓
High Blood Pressure						✓

* At least 5% reported and >5% difference between drug and placebo

Are any of these medications controlled-substances?

- Lyrica is a controlled substance which means it may be habit-forming and has a potential for misuse.
- None of the other medications discussed here are controlled substances. However, these medications, once started, should not be stopped abruptly without talking to your doctor.

When should brand-name medications be used?

Brand-name medications may be an option when generics have not been successful in helping people manage their fibromyalgia symptoms.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Talk to your doctor about your medication options. Generic options provide the best value for fibromyalgia. Cymbalta, Lyrica or Savella may have value when generic medications have not been successful.

Note: Since many medication options are available, our physicians and pharmacists developed this to provide you with information about the available alternatives, as well as potential advantages and lack of advantages of the various products. This medication summary was developed based upon an evaluation of information from the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), scientific studies, and input from practicing doctors and specialists.

