

BACLOFEN DOSAGE

Baclofen is frequently prescribed at 40-80 mg daily, with very little attention given to gradual dosage manipulation from a lower amount to the eventual desired daily level. As a result, there is frequently a sense of limb and even torso weakness, probably due to the very accelerated rate at which baclofen is absorbed into the body, even when taken orally but more so when it is ingested using a pump.

This weakness is frequently, if not usually, felt to be a “worsening of ALS symptoms”, on the assumption that limb weakness is always a symptom of further lower motor neuron (emanating from the spinal cord) distress. As a result, the overuse of baclofen is usually responded to with an overarching sense of depression (rather than an understanding that it is a side effect of “too much/too soon” baclofen).

We therefore suggest that baclofen, a very good medication for the relief of upper motor neuron symptoms such as rigidity and spasticity, be gradually dosed upwards from an initial dosage of 10 mg or maximum 20 mg daily. There is no absolute formula as to how soon a higher dosage can be tolerated without causing weakness, but a reliable approach is to only take what is truly needed (as opposed to assuming the requirement for the highest dosage and/or using baclofen as a prophylactic, or preventative, medication).

These recommendations and warnings are based on the frequent reactions, and resolutions, from hundreds of baclofen-prescribed patients with whom we have been associated during the past ten years. As always, we urge that you discuss these recommendations with your prescribing physician for either agreement or a healthy and informative contradiction.