

International visitors
are eager to see
what many of us
take for granted —
real, live nature.

OTW/SCOTT

cabin fever

An **MD** picks up a **paddle** during a
lodge-based adventure in Algonquin Park

The autumn morning I drove up to the Algonquin Log Cabin was picture perfect. I had cruised along narrow forest roads carpeted in colourful leaves. The log cabin blended seamlessly into the forest, its cedar stain giving off a warm and inviting aura. I felt lucky — which was certainly the theme for this trip.

My stay at the Algonquin Log Cabin was completely unexpected. When I attended the annual general meeting of the Sierra Club's Ontario Chapter, I had bought three raffle tickets for \$5, not really expecting to win anything. As it turned out, not only was each of my tickets a winner, I landed the top prize: a three-day trip to an authentic log cabin on Surprise Lake, at the northwest edge of Algonquin Park.

The cabin is one of two outposts op-

erated by Voyageur Quest, an eco-tour company which runs guided canoe adventures in the park as well as sea kayak trips on Georgian Bay. A maximum of 12 guests can be accommodated upstairs in the cabin's six small rooms. A recessed reading area with some very interesting books detailing the wildlife and history of the region satisfies insomniacs. Also located on the second floor are the only washrooms — excluding the countless trees around the cabin, of course. This is the great outdoors, after all.

After arriving, I dropped my backpack in my room before descending the wide wooden staircase to the very large

by Dr Brad Bowins

fireplace in the sitting area. The cabin is strictly electricity-free and, at night, it's up to the last ones up to extinguish the gas lights. So you can forget about televisions, radios, computers and even cell phones (though there is a satellite phone available in case of an emergency). What a way to unwind!

After the long drive, the aroma of delicious food drew me into the dining area where guests and staff were already chatting around a cedar log table. Despite the lack of electricity, the cooks prepare

Brad Bowins is a psychiatrist working in a private practice and at the University of Toronto Health Service. He first visited Algonquin Park last year in the fall, and returned this summer. An avid outdoorsman, he frequently kayaks in the Kawarthas near Peterborough. He is a longtime member of the Sierra Club and is the volunteer chair of the Conservation Committee and of Forest & Wildlife for its Ontario chapter.



The cabin is located on Surprise Lake in the northwest corner of Algonquin Park.



Canoeing excursions are the highlights of the stay.



Without a TV or radio around, guests have to entertain themselves.

log in here
Voyageur Quest (tel: 800-794-9660/416-486-3605; www.voyageurquest.com) offers a variety of outdoor programs in both summer and winter. There is also the option of renting the Algonquin Log Cabin for your group or family.

Their most popular package is the Algonquin Park Three-Day Lodge Adventure, which includes two-night log-cabin accommodations, all meals and guided canoeing and hiking excursions. The cost is \$425 per adult and \$280 for children under 13.

For more information about accommodations, entry and camping fees to **Algonquin Provincial Park** (tel: 705-633-5572; www.algonquinpark.on.ca) visit the park's website or contact the **Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership** (tel: 800-ONTARIO; www.ontariotravel.net).

gourmet meals. And, in keeping with the rural Canadian theme, maple syrup is a key ingredient in several dishes.

ALGONQUIN INTERNATIONAL

As other guests arrived, it quickly became apparent that much of the clientele was from outside Canada, some visiting for the first time. We met a couple from Australia, a group of friends from Holland and a family from England. The Danes and other Scandinavians seemed to love the destination, finding it comparable in many ways to their own wild regions.

Voyageur Quest markets the experience in Europe and has discovered that visitors to Canada are eager to see what many of us take for granted — real, live nature. The international composition of the guests adds a unique dimension to the stay, in that Canadians can learn about different countries while sharing knowledge about life in Canada.

Meals were jovial encounters, with lots of humour going back and forth and

unique life experiences being shared. We discovered that, in the absence of television, radio, computers and cell phones, people actually seem to talk to and learn about strangers — an interesting discovery in and of itself.

Taking advantage of its location in one of Canada's premier provincial parks, the cabin offers activities in the great outdoors all year long. Winter visits are filled with backcountry cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and very popular dogsled-ding outings. Ice fishing, snowmobiling and skating on Surprise Lake are also possible. The remainder of the year, hiking, wildlife excursions and canoe adventures await. A nearby sauna cabin with showers is a well-used amenity year-round.

Guests can choose from fully guided stays, unguided outings or they can pay for individual excursions, like the early morning canoe and breakfast outing we embarked on. The second morning of our stay, we woke well before dawn and, still half asleep, made our way to a waiting van.

We beached our canoes and plunged in for a bracing autumn swim. The Canadians were fine. The international guests preferred to stay dry

After a short drive we reached a lake populated by several beavers. As the cloudy dawn broke, we paddled out and in no time were watching and photographing beavers as they swam to and fro. Their very intense work left little doubt as to why the saying "busy little beaver" arose.

With our hunger mounting, we stopped at a hilly site where our guide prepared Canadian back-bacon with maple syrup, buns and coffee boiled over a fire. It was stereotypically Canadian and, at the same time, an unusual breakfast in these fast-paced times.

Voyageur Quest's guided hikes are a great way to learn about aboriginal, pioneer and natural history. Our guide shared

detailed information regarding the geology of the region, showing us exposed rocks at the summit of a steep hill. The surrounding view was truly spectacular, blanketed in a multi-coloured forest, dark blue lake and grassy swamps.

On our way back down the hill, we learned about the various trees found in the park and how to distinguish similar looking species, like evergreens, which turned out to be quite a challenge. It was even more difficult to identify animals at night based only on their sounds. Equipped with flashlights, our whole group hiked down a short trail into the bush. We discovered that there was quite a bit of activity in the forest after dark, includ-

ing a shocked mouse who just stared at me when my flashlight beam fell on it.

WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE

Surprise Lake offered other unexpected treats, like small, forested islands that we could call our own, at least for a short while. We beached our canoes and plunged in for a refreshing and bracing autumn swim. The Canadians in the group, who

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GABA_A or GABA_B receptors, nor does it augment GABA_A responses like benzodiazepines or barbiturates. In contrast to vascular calcium channel blockers, pregabalin does not alter systemic blood pressure or cardiac function. Various *in vitro* and *in vivo* results differentiate pregabalin from GABA uptake inhibitors or GABA transaminase inhibitors. In addition, pregabalin does not block sodium channels, it is not active at opiate receptors, it does not alter cyclooxygenase enzyme activity, it is not a serotonin agonist, it is not a dopamine antagonist, and it is not an inhibitor of dopamine, serotonin or noradrenaline reuptake. Pregabalin treatment reduces pain-related behavior in neuropathic animal models of diabetes, peripheral nerve damage or chemotherapeutic insult and in a model of musculoskeletal-associated pain. Pregabalin given intrathecally prevents pain-related behaviors and reduces pain-related behavior caused by spinally administered agents, suggesting that it acts directly on tissues of the spinal cord or brain. **Pharmacokinetics** All pharmacological actions following pregabalin administration are due to the activity of the parent compound; pregabalin is not appreciably metabolized in humans. Mean steady-state plasma pregabalin concentration-time profiles following 75, 300 and 600 mg/day given in equally divided doses every 8 hours (TID) and 600 mg/day given in equally divided doses every 12 hours (BID) are shown in Table 8. Pregabalin pharmacokinetics are linear over the recommended daily dose range. Inter-subject pharmacokinetic variability for pregabalin is low (<20%).

Table 8. Pregabalin Mean (CV%) Steady-State Pharmacokinetic Parameter Values in Healthy Volunteers

Dose (mg)	Regimen	Daily Dose (mg/day)	n	C _{max} (µg/mL)	t _{max} (hr)	C _{min} (µg/mL)	AUC ₍₀₋₈₎ (µg·hr/mL)	t _{1/2} (hr)	C _{L/F} (mL/min)
25	TID ^a	75	8	1.39	0.9	0.45	6.7	5.9	64.1
				-19.5	-34.2	-25	-18.3	-17.3	-16.1
100	TID	300	6	5.03	0.8	1.94	25.2	6.3	68.9
				-21.3	-31	-33.6	-23	-19.6	-20.9
200	TID	600	11	8.52	0.9	3.28	41.7	6.3	81
				-14.8	-22.2	-29.2	-12.8	-13.6	-11.7
300	BID ^c	600	8	9.07	1.4	2.6	59	6.7	85.1
				-10.5	-57.1	-15.5	-6.4	-16.2	-6.4

C_{max}: Steady-state peak plasma concentration.

t_{max}: Time of peak plasma concentration at steady state.

C_{min}: Steady-state trough plasma concentration

AUC₍₀₋₈₎: Area under the plasma concentration-time curve during one dosing interval at steady state

t_{1/2}: Elimination half-life

C_{L/F}: Oral clearance

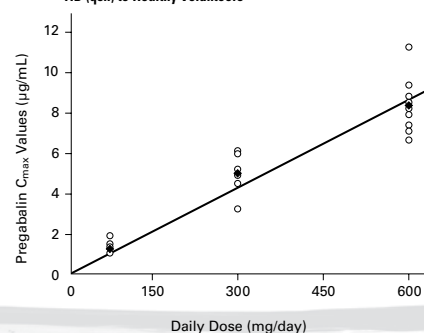
a: Percent coefficient of variation

b: Total daily dose given in equally divided doses every 8 hours

c: Total daily dose given in equally divided doses every 12 hours

Absorption: Pregabalin is rapidly absorbed when administered in the fasted state, with peak plasma concentrations occurring within 1.5 hours following both single- and multiple-dose administration. Pregabalin oral bioavailability is ≥90% and is independent of dose. C_{max} (Figure 1) and AUC values increase proportionally following single- and multiple-dose administration. Following repeated administration, steady state is achieved within 24 to 48 hours. Multiple dose pharmacokinetics are predictable from single-dose data.

Figure 1. Individual and Mean Steady-State Pregabalin C_{max} Values Following 75, 300 and 600 mg/day Given in Equally Divided Doses TID (q8h) to Healthy Volunteers^a



a: Solid line is the regression line going through the origin; individual (○) and mean (◆) values.

Distribution: In preclinical studies, pregabalin has been shown to readily cross the blood brain barrier in mice, rats and monkeys. Pregabalin is a substrate for system L transporter which is responsible for the transport of large amino acids across the blood-brain barrier. Pregabalin has been shown to cross the placenta in rats and is present in the milk of lactating rats. In humans, the apparent volume of distribution of pregabalin following oral administration is approximately 0.5 L/kg. Pregabalin is not bound to plasma proteins. At clinically efficacious doses of 150 and 600 mg/day, the average steady-state plasma pregabalin concentrations were approximately 1.5 and 6.0 µg/mL, respectively. **Metabolism:** Pregabalin undergoes negligible metabolism in humans. Following a dose of radiolabeled pregabalin, approximately 98% of the radioactivity recovered in the urine was unchanged pregabalin. The N-methylated derivative of pregabalin, the major metabolite of pregabalin found in urine, accounted for 0.9% of the dose. In preclinical studies, pregabalin (S-enantiomer) did not undergo racemization to the R-enantiomer in mice, rats, rabbits or monkeys. **Excretion:** Pregabalin is eliminated from the systemic circulation primarily by renal excretion as unchanged drug. Pregabalin mean t_{1/2} is 6.3 hours. Pregabalin elimination is proportional to creatinine clearance. Pregabalin clearance is reduced in patients with impaired renal function (see **DOSE AND ADMINISTRATION, Special Populations and Conditions**).

Pregabalin undergoes negligible metabolism, is not bound to plasma proteins and is eliminated predominantly as unchanged drug by renal excretion. Clinically important differences in pregabalin pharmacokinetics due to race and gender have not been observed and are not anticipated. **Pediatrics:** Pharmacokinetics of pregabalin have not been studied in paediatric patients. **Geriatrics:** Pregabalin oral clearance tended to decrease with increasing age. This decrease in pregabalin oral clearance is consistent with age-related decreases in creatinine clearance. Reduction of pregabalin dose may be required in patients who have age-related compromised renal function (see **WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS** and **DOSE AND ADMINISTRATION**). **Gender:** A population pharmacokinetic analysis of the Phase 2/3 clinical program showed that the relationship between daily dose and pregabalin

drug exposure is similar between genders when adjusted for gender-related differences in creatinine clearance. **Race:** A population pharmacokinetic analysis of the Phase 2/3 clinical program showed that the relationship between daily dose and pregabalin drug exposure is similar among Caucasians, Blacks and Hispanics. **Renal Insufficiency:** Because renal elimination is the major elimination pathway, dosage reduction in patients with renal dysfunction is necessary. Pregabalin is effectively removed from plasma by hemodialysis. Following a 4-hour hemodialysis treatment, plasma pregabalin concentrations are reduced by approximately 50%. For patients on hemodialysis, dosing must be modified (see **DOSE AND ADMINISTRATION**).

STORAGE AND STABILITY

Store at 15°C-30°C.

DOSE FORMS, COMPOSITION AND PACKAGING

Each capsule of LYRICA (pregabalin) contains 25, 50, 75, 150 or 300 mg pregabalin, lactose monohydrate, maize starch and talc. The capsule shells contain gelatin and titanium dioxide. In addition, the orange capsule shells contain red iron oxide and the white capsule shells contain sodium lauryl sulfate and colloidal silicon dioxide. Colloidal silicon dioxide is a manufacturing aid, which may not be present. The markings on the capsules are in black ink, which contains shellac, black iron oxide, propylene glycol, potassium hydroxide and water.

Capsules are packaged in HDPE bottles containing 60 capsules, and PVC/aluminum blisters.

PHARMACEUTICAL INFORMATION

Drug Substance

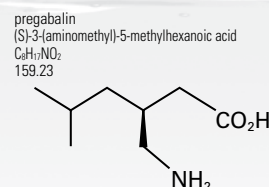
Proper name:

Chemical name:

Molecular formula:

Molecular mass:

Structural formula:



Physicochemical

properties:

Pregabalin is a white crystalline solid. It is soluble in water and in both basic and acidic aqueous solutions.

Product Monograph available upon request.

Last revised: June 3, 2005.

References:

1. LYRICA Product Monograph, June 2005.
2. Data on file, Pfizer Canada Inc., study 1008-196.
3. Freynhagen R, et al. Efficacy of pregabalin in neuropathic pain evaluated in a 12-week, randomised, double-blind, multicentre, placebo-controlled trial of flexible- and fixed-dose regimens. *Pain* 2005;115:254-263.



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Member



CABIN FEVER

Continued from page 57

were used to cold lake water, were fine. But the international guests preferred to stay dry, referring to us as "Crazy Canucks".

Although each island is unique, Red Rock Island literally stood out, its sheer rock face offering a four-metre dive into deep water. There were no takers from the international guests, only Crazy Canucks took the plunge. This same evergreen island also has a nice trail with moss and pine needles cushioning every step.

Swamps are everywhere in lake country and Surprise Lake is no exception. Two large swamps are accessed through narrow inlets at both ends of the lake. A twisting stream at one end ushers paddlers to twin tooth-shaped boulders artistically sculpted and arranged by receding glaciers.

At the other end of the lake, towards Red Rock Island, a pristine wetland is yours to discover. The brushing of reeds and water lilies sliding along the smooth underside of the canoe was the only sound around, until Canada geese hidden amongst

the vegetation became airborne. Warmed physically and emotionally by the bright sun reflecting off the water and white lilies, I sat back and relaxed.

While the sun set, I paddled to a canoe-lined beach where the other guests and guides were assembled for dinner. Barbequed fish and chicken were served with vegetables on a table improvised from an upturned canoe. As darkness descended and cooler air settled around us, we moved closer to the fire like true *voyageurs* — 17th-century trappers working for Montreal fur merchants — must have in days long gone.

The guides shared stories about what life was like in those days for both the *voyageurs* and First Nations. Some of the guests showed off aboriginal dream catchers they had made during the day, with the help of the guides. This special night ended with a moonlight paddle back to the log cabin.

The last hour of our stay was spent chatting over a final lunch, which gave guests an opportunity to share their experiences. Several suggestions were made regarding how international visitors might

adapt their Algonquin Log Cabin experience to life back home.

I suggested to our Dutch guests that paddling a canoe down the canals of Amsterdam would keep them in touch with their newfound Canadian side. Stopping along a busy pedestrian section and cooking up some Canadian back bacon with maple syrup might also help promote visits to the great Canadian north.

They agreed and suggested that simply mentioning our guide's name should clear things up with the Amsterdam police. Oh well, I suppose that, like the rest of us, they'll have to rely on their memories and photos until they visit again.

Whistler
comes out of the gate with
world-class cuisine.
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