

## An anti-epileptic

# Valproate (val-pro-ate)

You should read this leaflet with your carer/care giver.



### Valproate:

- Is also called Sodium Valproate, Epilim, Orlept, Convulex or Depakote.
- Come as tablets, capsules, or liquid.

- Valproate is used for treating epilepsy and bipolar disorder.
- Valproate is sometimes used for people who are distressed. There is no clear evidence that it improves someone's behaviour.

The label on your valproate packet should tell you when and how much medicine to take.

Swallow your tablet or capsule with water,

Or,

Measure and swallow the liquid.

If you forget to take your medicine, tell someone straight away.

You should carry on taking your medicine even if you feel better unless your doctor asks you to stop.



Drinking alcohol when taking valproate could make you feel sleepy.

Some medicines do not work well together.

You should tell your doctor about any other medicines you are taking.

### Side effects:

- Medicine can have some effects on your body that are not wanted.
- Not everyone taking a medicine will get them.
- Many will go away with time.
- Many are rare.

You might want to talk to your doctor or the pharmacist or your key worker if you have any side effect.

These are some (but NOT all) side effects of valproate...



- Putting on weight (check weight regularly)
- A dry mouth or feeling very thirsty
- Feeling sick or being sick
- Feeling sleepy or sluggish
- Needing the toilet a lot
- Fine shaking in the hands
- Hair loss



Pregnant women and those who are planning to have children **MUST NOT** take this drug.

Some side effects are more serious.

You should tell someone straight away if you...

- Feel very unsteady on your feet
- Feel confused and you find it hard to think straight
- Feel very tired
- Are sick or lose your appetite
- Bruise without reason or bleed easily
- Have a rash on your skin
- Skin and eyes look yellow



You should talk to your doctor before you stop taking your medicine.

Sometimes, if you stop taking your medicine, you may:

- Feel dizzy or anxious
- Have trembling, twitching or shakiness

Regular blood tests must be done for:

- Full blood count, urea and electrolytes, kidney and liver function



This leaflet does not tell you everything about valproate.

You can get more information from:

- you can ask your pharmacist, doctor, nurse or carer/care giver
- check <http://www.choiceandmedication.org/cnw/>
- you can phone NHS on 111
- you can phone a medicine information helpline on 020 3317 5090.

This leaflet can be downloaded free of charge from:

<https://spectrom.wixsite.com/project/>

While preparing this leaflet we checked information in...

- The British National Formulary ([www.bnf.org](http://www.bnf.org))
- Dulcan, M. K., & Ballard, R. (2015). *Helping parents and teachers understand medications for behavioural and emotional problems: A resource book of medication information handouts*. American Psychiatric Publishing, Washington DC, USA.

This leaflet is not designed for people with intellectual/learning disabilities to read on their own. Support (care) staff or care givers should go through the leaflet with the person who has intellectual disabilities.

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