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## Department of Neurosciences

# Sodium Valproate drug information

Sodium Valproate is one of the oldest but effective antiepileptic drugs. It can be prescribed as a single drug or in combination with other antiepileptic medication. It is available in form of tablets, capsules, oral solution and a powder for reconstitution given as an injection.

### Drug brand names

- Sodium Valproate
- Epilim
- Epilim Chrono
- Convulex

We recommend that you receive the Epilim or Epilim Chrono brand.

### Uses

Sodium Valproate is used to reduce seizure frequency and severity in people who have epilepsy. It is also used to treat certain types of pain, migraine and manic depression.

### Side effects

Dose-related side effects become more likely, the higher the dose of medication and improve if the dose is reduced again. They sometimes occur temporarily when the medication is started or as the dose is increased. These include nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea. They often settle within a few weeks.

- The more common side effects are sleepiness, difficulty concentrating and tremor.
- Some patients will experience slight thinning of their hair. This is usually not noticeable to others but if it is a problem the drug can be stopped and the hair will grow back.
- Some patients will notice an increase in weight with this drug. The best way of dealing with this is to weigh yourself regularly on the same set of scales and if your weight starts to increase, discuss the options with your doctor.
- Medically serious side effects are very rare but may affect the blood or the liver. Blood tests will be performed where appropriate.

In the event of any of these side effects, contact the epilepsy nurse (contact details are at the end of the leaflet), or your GP.

## Contraception

Sodium Valproate does not affect the contraceptive pill or hormone replacement therapy (HRT). The pill is the most effective form of contraception in preventing pregnancy. However other preferred methods of contraception can be used.

## Pregnancy

There is some suggestion that Sodium Valproate may affect fertility in women, but this is not proven. You should ask to see your specialist to discuss your treatment before you conceive. Once you are pregnant it is too late to make changes. The risks to your baby from Sodium Valproate are about two to four in 100 of spina bifida or other serious problems. We recommend you take folic acid 5mg daily from at least eight weeks prior to conception until at least 13 weeks of pregnancy, to try to reduce this risk. Other possible risks include delayed mental development and low intelligence quotient (IQ).

## Drug interactions

Paracetamol can be given with Sodium Valproate. For any other medication you are prescribed or buy over the counter, always check with your doctor or pharmacist about any possible interactions with Sodium Valproate.

## Other useful information

- Try to take the medicine at the same time every day.
- If you forget to take a dose, take it as soon as you remember. Do not take two doses at once.
- Keep a record of your seizures when you start any new medication. This will help to determine future drug dosages.
- Do not stop taking Sodium Valproate unless your doctor tells you to.
- Store Sodium Valproate below 30 degrees and in the packaging that it comes in.

## Contact details

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the epilepsy nurse specialist on 01223 217992.

**The information on this leaflet is not exhaustive. Please refer to the patient information leaflet prepared by the manufacturer of your drug which can be found in the medicine packaging.**



We are currently working towards a smoke free site. Smoking is only permitted in the designated smoking areas.

For advice and support in quitting, contact your GP or the free NHS stop smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169

### Help with this leaflet:



If you would like this information in another language, large print or audio format, please ask the department to contact Patient Information: 01223 216032 or [patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk)

### Polish

Jeżeli chciałbyś uzyskać te informacje w innym języku, w dużej czcionce lub w formacie audio, poproś pracownika oddziału o kontakt z biurem Informacji Pacjenta (Patient Information) pod numerem telefonu: 01223 216032 lub pod adresem [patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk)

### Portuguese

Se precisar desta informação noutra língua, em impressão de letras grandes ou formato áudio, por favor peça ao departamento que contacte a secção de Informação aos Doentes (Patient Information) pelo telefone 01223 216032 ou através do e-mail [patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk)

### Arabic

إذا كنت تود الحصول على هذه المعلومات بلغة أخرى، بالأحرف الكبيرة أو بشكل شريط صوتي، يمكنك أن تطلب من القسم الاتصال بمعلومات المريض على الرقم: 01223216032 أو عبر البريد الإلكتروني: [patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk)

### Cantonese

如您需以另一語言版本、特大字體或錄音形式索取本資料，請要求部門聯絡病人諮詢服務：電話 01223 216032，電郵地址 [patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk)

### Turkish

Eğer bu bilgileri başka bir dilde veya büyük baskılı veya sesli olarak isterseniz, lütfen bulunduğunuz bölümdeki görevlilere söyleyin Hasta Bilgilendirme servisini arasinlar: 01223 216032 veya [patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk)

### Urdu

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی دیگر زبان میں، بڑے الفاظ میں یا آڈیو طریقہ سے درکار ہوں تو برائے مہربانی اس شعبہ سے پیشینٹ انفارمیشن سے ذیل کے ذریعہ رابطہ کرنے کی درخواست کریں: 01223 216032 یا [patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk)

### Bengali

আপনি যদি এই তথ্য অন্য কোন ভাষায়, বড় অক্ষরে বা অডিও রেকর্ডিং পেতে চান তাহলে 'প্যাশেন্ট ইনফরমেশান' এর সঙ্গে 01223 216032 নম্বরে ফোন করে বা [patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk) ঠিকানায় ই-মেইল করে যোগাযোগ করার জন্য ডিপার্টমেন্টটিতে অনুরোধ জানান।

## Document history

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