

About your medication

SODIUM VALPROATE

(EPILIM® , VALPRO® 100mg tablets
200 & 400mg enteric-coated tablets,
EPILIM® 200mg/5mL Syrup
200mg/5mL Sugar-free Liquid)

Other brands may be available

WHAT IS SODIUM VALPROATE?

Sodium valproate or valproic acid is from a group of medications called anti-epileptics or anti-convulsants. It is only available with a doctor's prescription.

WHAT IS IT FOR?

It is used to control seizures (fits) in most types of epilepsy. Sodium valproate may be used alone or in combination with other medicines for the treatment of epilepsy.

HOW TO TAKE THIS MEDICINE

It is important that this medication is taken only as directed and not given to other people.

Sodium valproate may take several days to show an initial effect and in some cases may take from two to six weeks for maximum effect. Treatment is started with low doses and may be increased over a couple of weeks according to your child's response.

Sodium valproate may be given with or after food to lessen stomach upset. Uncoated 100mg tablets may be crushed (or chewed) if necessary and swallowed with water. The coated 200mg and 500mg tablets should be swallowed whole with water. If using syrup or liquid, use a medicine measure, dropper or syringe to ensure the right amount is given.

From time to time your doctor may require your child to have blood tests to measure the blood level of the medication. This is done to achieve the best dosage and prevent side effects.

WHAT TO DO IF A DOSE IS MISSED

If you miss a dose of the medication it can be taken as soon as you remember. Do not take the missed dose if it is close to the next one; just take the next dose as normal. **Do not double up on any doses. If you miss two or more doses, call your doctor.**

STORING THE MEDICINE

It is important to keep sodium valproate locked away out of the reach of children.

Do not keep the medicine in the bathroom, near the kitchen sink or in other damp, warm places because this may make them less effective. Store in a cool, dry place, away from heat and direct light.

USE OF OTHER MEDICINES

Care must be taken when using sodium valproate with some other medications. Check with your doctor or pharmacist before giving any prescription medicine or medicine purchased without prescription from a pharmacy, supermarket, or health food shop. This is important for:

- Medications used to treat seizures or fits such as phenytoin, phenobarbitone, clonazepam, lamotrigine or carbamazepine
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- Medications used to thin the blood such as aspirin or warfarin or non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs taken for arthritis, fever or joint pain
- Medicines that make your child sleepy such as sedatives, strong pain relievers, anti-histamines or some “cold and flu” preparations

This list is not complete. Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about possible interactions with any over-the-counter or complementary medicines or recreational substances (e.g. alcohol).

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- Do not suddenly stop taking this medicine without first checking with your doctor, because it may increase the risk of seizures.
- If this medicine does not control your child’s seizures or if they have more seizures than before they started, tell your doctor.
- If your child is to have surgery, the doctor must be told that sodium valproate is being taken.
- This medication is used to help control your child’s condition but it does not cure it; it must be taken every day, even if your child feels well.

POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS

Side effects can occur while taking sodium valproate. Some of these are not serious and will go away with time or after the dose has been changed. Others are more serious and require you to check with your doctor.

Less serious side effects include:

- nausea, vomiting, stomach cramps
- drowsiness or dizziness
- restlessness or irritability
- diarrhoea or constipation
- tremor

More Serious (Contact doctor *as soon as possible* if any of the following occur):

- loss of seizure control
- severe weakness or dizziness
- severe vomiting that doesn’t go away
- unusual bleeding or bruising
- yellowing of the skin or eyes

Allergic reaction (Stop medicine and see doctor immediately):

- skin rash, itching or hives, swollen mouth or lips, wheezing or difficulty breathing

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS CONTACT



***Your Child's Doctor via the RCH Switchboard
on 03 9345 5522***

OR

***Pharmacy Department on 03 9345 5492
IN CASE OF POISONING OR OVERDOSE CONTACT
POISONS INFORMATION CENTRE 13 11 26
(24 hour service)***

This leaflet answers some common questions about your child's medicine. It does not contain all available information. It does not take the place of talking to your child's doctor or pharmacist. The leaflet may differ from information in the manufacturer's Consumer Medicine Information. The information in this leaflet reflects the usage of medicine under medical supervision by patients of The Royal Children's Hospital. Medicine may be used in children in different ways or for different reasons than in adults - for more information see the leaflet "[Medicines for Children](#)". This leaflet includes information current at the time of review of the document – OCTOBER 2010.
