
DIVALPROEX SODIUM (Depakote) Fact Sheet for Patients

Generic Name: Divalproex sodium (dye-VAL-pro-ex SO-dee-um)

Brand Name: Depakote

What Does It Treat?

Divalproex sodium is used to treat various conditions, including epilepsy, bipolar disorder, and migraine headaches. It helps to control seizures, stabilize mood, and reduce the frequency and intensity of migraines.

How Does It Work?

Divalproex sodium works by increasing the levels of a neurotransmitter called gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA) in the brain. This helps to calm excessive electrical activity and stabilize mood.

How Do I Take It?

Divalproex sodium is available in tablet form as well as sprinkles. It is typically taken orally, with or without food. Follow your health care provider's instructions on dosing and schedule.

What is the Dose?

The dose of divalproex sodium varies depending on the condition being treated. For instance, the typical dosage, used for bipolar disorder, is 250-750 mg twice a day. It is important to follow your health care provider's instructions regarding the dose.

How Long Will I Take It?

The duration of divalproex sodium treatment can vary depending on the condition being treated. Your health care provider will assess your progress and determine the appropriate length of treatment, which may be long-term for conditions like epilepsy or bipolar disorder.

What If I Miss a Dose?

If you forget to take a dose of divalproex sodium, take it as soon as you remember. However, if it is close to the time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and continue with your regular dosing schedule. Do not take extra doses to make up for the missed one.

What Are Possible Side Effects?

- Most common: Nausea, vomiting, drowsiness, dizziness, tremor, weight gain, hair loss.
- Serious but rare: Liver problems, pancreatitis (abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting), increased ammonia levels (confusion).

What Else Should I Know?

- Divalproex sodium may interact with other medications, so inform your health care provider of all the medications you are taking.
- Regular monitoring of liver function may be required during treatment.
- Inform your health care provider if you have a history of liver disease, pancreatitis, or are pregnant or planning to become pregnant.
- Do not stop taking divalproex sodium abruptly without consulting your health care provider, as it may lead to increased seizure activity or mood changes.

Remember, this fact sheet provides general information about this medication. For more specific guidance and instructions, consult your health care provider.