

# SODIUM VALPROATE (MR)



## Other names

Epilim, Episenta, Epival (sodium valproate)  
Depakote, Convulex (valproic acid)

## Drug category

Broad spectrum anticonvulsant  
Multiple mechanisms

## Uses

Sodium valproate is used for all types of epilepsy and bipolar disorder. It is also tried for migraine.

## Available forms

Modified release tablet/capsule (this should be used if possible), gastro-resistant tablet, liquid, IV injection.  
If switching from valproic acid, convert to 1.15x dose and round down.

## Some potential side-effects (inform your doctor if you think you have a serious side-effect)

Nausea, dizziness, hair loss (curly regrowth), weight gain, irregular periods, tremor, drowsiness  
Rare: Liver disease, severe blistering rash, reduced immunity, bone fracture

## Not to be used if:

Active liver disease, mitochondrial disorder  
Porphyria, SLE (lupus)  
Woman of childbearing age

## Contraception, pregnancy and breastfeeding

Women of childbearing age **must** be on a pregnancy prevention programme and check this site:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/valproate-use-by-women-and-girls>

Use long-acting contraception. Causes increased risk of birth defects (10%) and high risk of developmental disorders in babies (40%) such as speech delay, lower IQ and ADHD. Avoid during breastfeeding.

## Interactions with other drugs

Many interactions including: increased levels of lamotrigine and propofol. Acetazolamide and topiramate may make side-effects more likely. Also affects phenytoin and primidone levels. Avoid alcohol.

## Monitoring

Liver function tests and full blood count when started. Consider drug levels, vitamin D level and ammonia level.

## How to use it (Once a day: Easier to remember, Twice a day: Fewer side-effects)

Day	Twice a day plan		Once a day plan
	Morning dose	Evening dose	Evening only
Start date	Nil	200mg	200mg
2 weeks later	200mg	200mg	400mg
4 weeks later	300mg	300mg	600mg
After 4 weeks	Continue same dose		Continue same dose

If 600mg per day does not help and you have no side-effects, then it can be increased to a higher dose, and this can be done by adding 200mg every 2 weeks but the maximum dose should be no more than 2000mg in a day (1000mg twice a day). If reducing it, do this in steps of 200mg every week until stopped.

Do not switch between modified-release and regular sodium valproate tablets.

**This information is for guidance only. Always read the medicine information leaflet with any new medicine for full details.**