

VALPROATE

DRUG NAME

Generic: Valproate

Class of drug: Antiepileptic

Brands in Australia: Epilim, Valpro (other generic brands available)

DOSAGE FORM

Available as a 100 mg tablet, 200 mg tablet or 500 mg tablet. Quantity 100 tablets.

Also available as a 40 mg/mL oral liquid. Quantity 300mL.

HOW IT WORKS

Calms nerve activity, mainly by increasing a calming brain chemical called GABA. It's less commonly used for pain but may help in some nerve conditions or migraine prevention.

Onset of action

- May take **1–2 weeks** to start noticing benefit.
- Full effect may take **4–6 weeks** once the right dose is reached.

DOSAGE & FREQUENCY

Your doctor will advise on the starting dose and guide the dose changes.

- start with _____
- if tolerated, increase to _____ after _____ days
- if necessary, increase by _____ every _____ week(s)
- if successive increases are well tolerated *and bring additional benefit*, continue to titrate up to a maximum of _____
- to be reviewed by your doctor on _____

Usual starting dose for pain: low dose, adjusted gradually. Often titrated slowly to minimise side effects.

Typical pain management doses are **lower than epilepsy doses**. Exact dose depends on your age, condition, and tolerance.

ROUTE OF ADMINISTRATION

Oral (by mouth) unless otherwise specified.

WHAT ELSE SHOULD I KNOW WHILE TAKING THIS MEDICATION

- Take with food to reduce stomach upset. Swallow the enteric coated tablets whole; do not crush or chew them.
- Valproate may make you feel drowsy; if affected, do not drive or operate machinery. This medicine may also increase the effects of alcohol.
- Your appetite may increase when taking this medicine and you may need to pay more attention to your diet to avoid weight gain.

- Tell your doctor immediately if symptoms such as fever, rash, abdominal pain, vomiting, jaundice, bruising or bleeding develop.
- Do not stop taking this medicine suddenly unless your doctor tells you to.
- *Females:* always use effective contraception during treatment as valproate can cause harm if taken during pregnancy, including birth defects and developmental problems. Talk to your doctor before planning pregnancy.
- Your doctor should also monitor your platelet counts, liver function, vitamin D and calcium.

STORAGE INSTRUCTIONS

Refer to manufacturer's instructions.

DISPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS

Return unused or expired medication to your pharmacy for safe disposal.

MISSED DOSE INSTRUCTIONS

Ask your doctor or pharmacist.

EMERGENCY INSTRUCTIONS

Seek immediate medical help if you suspect overdose or experience severe side effects such as chest pain, seizures, or difficulty breathing.

Stop treatment promptly if:

- there is loss of seizure control, anorexia, vomiting, ataxia, impaired consciousness, jaundice or swelling (may indicate hepatitis or pancreatitis)
- there are allergic responses
- spontaneous bruising or bleeding occurs (may indicate thrombocytopenia, effect on clotting factors or hepatotoxicity)

COMMON SIDE EFFECTS

- Nausea, stomach upset
- Weight gain
- Hair thinning (reversible)
- Tremor
- Tiredness
- Changes in appetite

SERIOUS SIDE EFFECTS

- Liver or pancreas damage (abdominal pain, jaundice, vomiting)
- Severe drowsiness or confusion
- Unusual bleeding or bruising (possible blood problems)
- Severe mood changes, suicidal thoughts
- Allergic reaction (rash, swelling, breathing problems)

MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR SIDE EFFECTS

- Nausea: Take with food.
- Tremor: Report to your doctor; dose adjustment may help.
- Weight gain: Monitor diet and stay active.
- Hair thinning: Usually temporary; improves with continued treatment.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

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Pain Specialist

Interactions:

- Can interact with other anti-seizure medicines, aspirin, and some antibiotics.
- Alcohol may increase drowsiness and liver risk.

Precautions:

- Talk to your doctor if you are planning to become pregnant, if you are pregnant or if you are breastfeeding, before using this medication.
- Caution in liver disease, kidney disease, or history of pancreatitis.
- Regular blood tests may be required to monitor liver function and blood counts.

TITRATION DIARY

Date	Dose Taken	Side Effects	Notes (e.g., sleep, pain relief)