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2. Valproic acid

Valproic acid

Generic name: valproic acid (oral/injection) [*val-PRO-ik-A-sid*]**Brand names:** [Depakene](#), [Depacon](#), [Stavzor](#)**Dosage forms:** intravenous solution (100 mg/mL), oral capsule (250 mg), oral liquid (250 mg/5 mL)**Drug class:** [Fatty acid derivative anticonvulsants](#)[Medically reviewed](#) by Drugs.com on Dec 18, 2024. Written by [Cerner Multum](#).[Uses](#) [Side effects](#) [Warnings](#) [Before taking](#) [Dosage](#) [Interactions](#)

What is valproic acid?

Valproic acid is used to treat various types of seizure disorders. Valproic acid is sometimes used together with other seizure medications.

Valproic acid is also used to treat manic episodes related to [bipolar disorder](#) ([manic depression](#)), and to prevent migraine headaches.

Valproic acid may also be used for purposes not listed in this medication guide.

Valproic acid side effects

Get emergency medical help if you have **signs of an allergic reaction** (hives, difficult breathing, swelling in your face or throat) or a **severe skin reaction** (fever, [sore throat](#), burning eyes, skin pain, red or purple skin rash with blistering and peeling).

Seek medical treatment if you have a serious drug reaction that can affect many parts of your body. Symptoms may include: skin rash, fever, swollen glands, muscle aches, severe weakness, unusual bruising, or yellowing of your skin or eyes.

Call your doctor at once if the person taking valproic acid has signs of liver or pancreas problems, such as: loss of appetite, upper stomach pain (that may spread to your back), ongoing nausea or [vomiting](#), dark urine, swelling in the face, or [jaundice](#) (yellowing of the skin or eyes).

Report any new or worsening symptoms to your doctor, such as: mood or behavior changes, [depression](#), [anxiety](#), [panic attacks](#), trouble sleeping, or if you feel impulsive, irritable, agitated, hostile, aggressive, restless, hyperactive (mentally or physically), or have thoughts about suicide or hurting yourself.

Call your doctor at once if you have any of these other side effects:

- confusion, tiredness, cold feeling, vomiting, change in your mental state;

- easy bruising, unusual bleeding (nose, mouth, or gums), purple or red pinpoint spots under your skin;
- severe [drowsiness](#); or
- worsening [seizures](#).

Severe drowsiness may be more likely in older adults.

Common side effects of valproic acid may include:

- nausea, vomiting, stomach pain, [diarrhea](#);
- dizziness, drowsiness, weakness;
- [headache](#);
- tremors, problems with walking or coordination;
- blurred vision, double vision;
- [hair loss](#); or
- changes in appetite, weight gain.

This is not a complete list of side effects and others may occur. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

 [Valproic acid side effects](#) (more detail)

Related/similar drugs

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Warnings

Valproic acid can cause liver failure that may be fatal, especially in children under age 2 and in people with liver problems caused by certain genetic disorders.

You should not use valproic acid if you have [liver disease](#), a urea cycle disorder, or a genetic disorder such as Alpers' disease or Alpers-Huttenlocher syndrome.

Do not start or stop taking this medicine during pregnancy without your doctor's advice. This medicine may harm an unborn baby or cause birth defects, but having a seizure during pregnancy could harm both mother and baby.

Do not use valproic acid to prevent migraine headaches if you are pregnant.

Call your doctor at once if the person taking this medicine has signs of liver or pancreas problems, such as: loss of appetite, upper stomach pain (that may spread to your back), ongoing nausea or vomiting, dark urine, swelling in the face, or jaundice (yellowing of the skin or eyes).

Do not stop using valproic acid without your doctor's advice. Stopping suddenly may cause a serious, life-threatening type of seizure.

Before taking this medicine

You should not use valproic acid if you are allergic to it, or if you have:

- liver disease;
- a urea cycle disorder; or
- a genetic mitochondrial (MYE-toe-KON-dree-al) disorder such as Alpers' disease or Alpers-Huttenlocher syndrome, **especially in a child younger than 2 years old.**

Valproic acid can cause liver failure that may be fatal, especially in children under age 2 and in people with liver problems caused by a genetic mitochondrial disorder.

Tell your doctor if you have ever had:

- liver problems caused by a genetic mitochondrial disorder;
- depression, mental illness, or suicidal thoughts or actions;
- a family history of a urea cycle disorder or infant deaths with unknown cause; or
- HIV or CMV (cytomegalovirus) [infection](#).

Some young people have thoughts about suicide when first taking valproic acid. Your doctor should check your progress at regular visits. Your family or other caregivers should also be alert to changes in your mood or symptoms.

Using valproic acid during pregnancy may increase the risk of serious birth defects that can develop early in pregnancy, even before you know you are pregnant. Using valproic acid during pregnancy can also affect cognitive ability (reasoning, intelligence, problem-solving) later in your child's life. However, having a seizure during pregnancy could harm both the mother and the baby.

If you take valproic acid for seizures or manic episodes: The benefit of preventing these conditions may outweigh any risks posed by this medicine. There may be other medications that are safer to use during pregnancy. **Do not start or stop taking valproic acid without your doctor's advice.**

Do not use valproic acid to prevent migraine headaches if you are pregnant or you could become pregnant.

If you are not pregnant, use effective birth control to prevent pregnancy while using valproic acid. Tell your

doctor if you start or stop using hormonal contraception that contains estrogen ([birth control pills](#), injections, implants, skin patches, and vaginal rings). Estrogen can interact with valproic acid and make it less effective in preventing seizures.

It may not be safe to breastfeed while using this medicine. Ask your doctor about any risk.

How should I take valproic acid?

Follow all directions on your prescription label and read all medication guides or instruction sheets. Your doctor may occasionally change your dose. Use the medicine exactly as directed.

Valproic acid **oral** is taken by mouth. Valproic acid **injection** is given as an infusion into a vein. A healthcare provider will give you this injection if you are unable to take the medicine by mouth.

Drink plenty of water while you are taking this medication. Your dose may need to be changed if you do not get enough fluids each day.

Take with food if this medicine upsets your stomach.

Measure **liquid medicine** with a special dose-measuring spoon or medicine cup. If you do not have a dose-measuring device, ask your pharmacist for one.

Swallow the **capsule** whole and do not crush, chew, break, or open it.

Tell your doctor if you notice a capsule shell in your stool that was not absorbed or melted in the body. Your blood levels of valproic acid may need to be checked.

You may need frequent blood tests.

If you need surgery, tell the surgeon ahead of time that you are using valproic acid.

In case of emergency, wear or carry medical identification to let others know you use valproic acid.

Do not stop using valproic acid suddenly, even if you feel fine. Stopping suddenly may cause a serious, life-threatening type of seizure. Follow your doctor's instructions about tapering your dose.

Store at room temperature away from moisture and heat.

 [Detailed Valproic acid dosage information](#)

What happens if I miss a dose?

Take the medicine as soon as you can, but skip the missed dose if it is almost time for your next dose. **Do not** take two doses at one time.

What happens if I overdose?

Seek emergency medical attention or call the Poison Help line at 1-800-222-1222.

What should I avoid while taking valproic acid?

Drinking alcohol may increase certain side effects of valproic acid.

Avoid driving or hazardous activity until you know how valproic acid will affect you. Your reactions could be impaired.

What other drugs will affect valproic acid?

Sometimes it is not safe to use certain medications at the same time. Some drugs can affect your blood levels of other drugs you take, which may increase side effects or make the medications less effective.

Many drugs can affect valproic acid. This includes prescription and over-the-counter medicines, [vitamins](#), and [herbal products](#). **Not all possible interactions are listed here.** Tell your doctor about all your current medicines and any medicine you start or stop using.

i [Valproic acid drug interactions](#) (more detail)

Does valproic acid interact with my other drugs?

Enter medications to view a detailed interaction report using our [Drug Interaction Checker](#).

valproic acid

+

Enter a drug name

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Patient resources

- [Valproic acid advanced reading](#)
- [Valproate Injection](#)

- [Valproic Acid Capsules](#)
- [Valproic Acid Liquid](#)

Other brands

[Valproate Sodium](#), [Depakene](#), [Depacon](#), [Stavzor](#)

Professional resources

- [Valproic Acid monograph](#)
- [Valproate \(FDA\)](#)
- [Valproic Acid Capsules \(FDA\)](#)
- [Valproic Acid Oral Solution \(FDA\)](#)
- [Valproic Acid Syrup \(FDA\)](#)

Other brands

[Depakene](#), [Depacon](#)

Related treatment guides

- [Bipolar Disorder](#)
- [Epilepsy](#)
- [Cluster-Tic Syndrome](#)
- [Headache](#)

Further information

Remember, keep this and all other medicines out of the reach of children, never share your medicines with others, and use this medication only for the indication prescribed.

Always consult your healthcare provider to ensure the information displayed on this page applies to your personal circumstances.

[Medical Disclaimer](#)


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DRUG STATUS

Availability

Rx Prescription only

[Pregnancy & Lactation](#)

 Risk data available

CSA Schedule*

N/A Not a controlled drug



Approval History



Drug history at FDA



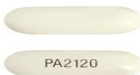
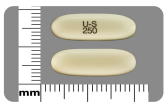
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