

# DIVALPROEX

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If you have bipolar disorder, seizures, or migraines, you may be prescribed Divalproex. You may also be familiar with its brand name, Depakote. Divalproex is a high alert medication, which means if you do not take it exactly as prescribed it may cause illness or injury.

To understand how Divalproex works, let's look at how seizures are caused in your body.

Your brain is constantly firing information and messages to the rest of your body, telling you what to think, what to feel and what to do. When you suffer from seizures or bipolar disorder, your brain is firing messages that are out of control.

Divalproex enhances a chemical in the brain called GABA, which helps calm down the signals that are firing out of control. At the same time, it slows signals going down the spine to help reduce seizures.

Divalproex comes in a tablet, extended release tablet or sprinkle capsule. Your healthcare provider will decide how much you need to take and how best to take it.

Divalproex is a powerful medication. Some people should not take it. Do not take Divalproex if you are allergic to the ingredients in it.

Do not take Divalproex if you have liver disease.

If you are pregnant, planning to get pregnant, or breastfeeding tell your healthcare provider before taking Divalproex. A different medication may be safer for you and your baby.

If you are pregnant, do not take Divalproex for the prevention of migraine headaches.

Before taking Divalproex, tell your healthcare provider if you have a history of: liver disease, a urea cycle disorder, genetic mitochondrial disorder or depression.

Let all of your healthcare providers know you are taking Divalproex, including your dentist.

In case of emergency, wear an alert bracelet and carry a wallet card to let all healthcare providers know you are taking Divalproex.

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Before taking Divalproex, give your healthcare provider a complete list of all other medications you use, including vitamins and herbal supplements.

While taking this medication, you will require regular blood work. Make sure to keep all of your doctor's appointments, including those for lab work.

Some side effects of Divalproex include: nausea or vomiting, stomach upset, diarrhea, headache, dizziness, blurred vision, trouble with balance, drowsiness, trouble sleeping, hair loss, muscle weakness, tremors, and weight gain.

If you do notice any of these side effects contact your healthcare provider about how to manage them.

Be aware that you are at an increased risk of falling while taking Divalproex. Get up from a sitting or lying position slowly.

Do not drive or operate heavy machinery, including your car, until you know how Divalproex affects you.

Be aware that drinking alcohol while taking Divalproex can increase certain side effects.

You may sunburn more easily when taking Divalproex so make sure you wear sunscreen and protective clothing when outdoors.

If you have an allergic reaction like: trouble breathing, hives, or swelling of your face or throat; call 911.

If you have: loss of appetite, stomach pain, dark urine, ongoing nausea or vomiting, yellowing of the eyes and skin, severe pain in your upper stomach moving to your back or changes in your mood or behavior; call your healthcare provider right away.

This is not the complete list of side effects. Make sure you discuss all possible side effects with your healthcare provider.

Take Divalproex exactly as prescribed. Do not change your dose or take it for longer than prescribed.

When taking a Divalproex tablet, always swallow the tablet whole with plenty of water. Do not cut, break, chew, crush or dissolve this medication.

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If you are taking Divalproex sprinkle capsule and have trouble swallowing, open the capsule and add the medication to apple sauce or other soft food and take it right away.

Take your medication at the same time each day to avoid missing a dose. Try setting an alert on your phone or watch so you don't forget. If you miss a dose, take your Divalproex as soon as possible. If it is almost time for your next dose, skip your missed dose and return to your normal medication schedule.

Do not double dose. If you think you have taken too much Divalproex, call 911. An overdose can lead to death.

Store Divalproex away from moisture and direct sunlight. Your bathroom medicine cabinet is not the best place because of moisture. Do not leave your medication where it could get too hot or too cold.

Always store your medication out of sight and out of reach of children to prevent accidents.

When you are done taking Divalproex tablets, crush all of your remaining pills and mix them with undesirable trash like kitty litter or coffee grounds.

Do not sell or give your Divalproex to anyone else. It is against the law and can seriously harm anyone else taking it. Contact your local police station for more information on proper disposal directions.

Divalproex can help you manage bipolar disorder, seizures and migraines. But it is a powerful medication that should only be taken exactly as prescribed. If you have any questions about Divalproex, ask your healthcare provider and pharmacist for more information.