Depakine (also known as Depakine Chrono) is a medicine that contains an active substance called valproic acid. It belongs to a group of medicines called antiepileptic medicines (used to treat epilepsy). It is used to treat:

- Epilepsy.
- Bipolar disorders (manic episodes), if you cannot tolerate the side effects of lithium.
- To prevent a migraine.

**Precautions**

Depakine should be avoided in the following conditions:

- In patients who are allergic to active substance, valproic acid, or other similar medicines. If you are experiencing symptoms of an allergy, such as:
  - rash,
  - itching of the skin,
  - swelling,
  - difficulty breathing, contact your doctor.
- Patients who have had hepatic impairment.
- In patients who have porphyria (a genetic disease that leads to liver damage).
- In patients with renal impairment.
- In patients with bleeding disorders. This medicine can reduce the number of platelets in your blood, which increases the risk of bleeding. Avoid activities that may cause bruising, injury and bleeding. When your skin is broken, platelets clump together and form clots to
stop the bleeding. If you have low platelet count, it means your body cannot stop itself from bleeding.

- Patients with depression or in patients who have had suicidal thoughts. This medicine may cause suicidal thoughts (very rarely). If you are experiencing this side effect, contact your doctor immediately.
- In patients with HIV infection.
- During pregnancy and breastfeeding.
- In patients with alcohol dependence.

In patients with dementia.

This medicine may cause dizziness. If you feel dizzy you should avoid driving or using tools and machinery.

If you are having surgery, tell your doctor that you are taking this medicine.

**Use of Depakine during pregnancy and breastfeeding**

Depakine should not be used during pregnancy because it can cause a number of malformations (deformities of the head and face, cleft palate, spina bifida-neural tube defect, deformities in bones and others). The risk of malformations is increased if this medicine is used in combination with other antiepileptic medicines.

This medication passes into breast milk, therefore you should avoid breastfeeding while using this medicine.

**How to use**

Depakine should be taken once or twice a day. The dose depends on the severity of the condition and body weight.

**Dosage in adults:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Dosage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Epilepsy</td>
<td>The usual initial dose is 600 mg per day <em>(usually 300 mg twice a day)</em>. Daily dosage can be increased by 200 mg every three days, until the desired effect is achieved. The usual maintenance dose is from 1000 to 2000 mg per day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bipolar disorders</td>
<td>The usual initial dose is 750 mg per day <em>(in two divided doses)</em> and can be increased until the desired effect is achieved. Maximum daily dose is 2000 mg or 60 mg/kg. It should not be used for more than 3 weeks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(manic episodes)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migraine prevention</td>
<td>250 mg twice a day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Depakine can be used in children above the age of 10, in order to treat epilepsy and usual initial dose is 10-15 mg/kg per day.

Example: If your child weighs 45 kg, the dosage regimen should be calculated as follows:
From $45 \times 10 = 450$ mg daily (if doctor has prescribed the 10 mg/kg)

Up to $45 \times 15 = 675$ mg daily (if doctor has prescribed the 15 mg/kg)

Therefore, for a 45 kg child, the daily dose is in a range of 450 to 675 mg per day. Dosage can be increased by 5 mg/kg every three days until the desired effect is achieved.

Swallow the tablet whole with a glass of water. Do not crush or chew the tablet, as this may affect its activity.

You should take this medicine with or immediately after a meal.

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**Use with other medicines (Interactions)**

Depakine should be avoided in combination with the following medicines:

- **Anticoagulant medicines (also known as blood thinners), such as:**
  - warfarin (*Farin*),
  - acenocoumarol (*Sinkum 4, Sintrom*),
  - heparin,
  - nadropran and others. Concomitant use of Depakine with these medicines, increases the risk of bleeding.

- **Other medicines used in the treatment of epilepsy, such as:**
  - carbamazepine,
  - lamotrigine,
  - phenytoin,
  - topiramate (*Topamax*), and others.

- **Tranquilizers (anxiolytics), from the group called benzodiazepines, such as:**
  - diazepam,
  - bromazepam,
  - lorazepam,
  - nitrazepam,
  - alprazolam,
  - midazolam, and others,

- **Medicines used in the treatment of HIV (AIDS).**

- **Antidepressants, medicines used in the treatment of depression, such as:**
  - moclobemide,
  - selegiline,
  - isocarboxazid,
  - tranylcypromine, and others.

- **Medicines used in the treatment of various mental illnesses (antipsychotics).**

- **Antibiotics, medicines used in the treatment of bacterial infections, such as:**
  - erythromycin,
  - imipenem,
  - meropenem, and others.

- **Cholesterol lowering medications, such as: cholestyramine.**

- **Rifampicin, a medicine used in the treatment of tuberculosis.**

- **Medicines used in the treatment of malaria.**

- **Medicines used to treat pain (analgesics), such as: acetylsalicylic acid (*Aspirin*).**

Tell your doctor about all medications and herbal products you are taking.
Depakine may cause the following side effects:

1. nausea,
2. vomiting,
3. diarrhea,
4. abdominal pain,
5. hepatic impairment,
6. low platelet count (thrombocytopenia),
7. decrease in the number of white blood cells (leukopenia),
8. anemia,
9. bone marrow damage,
10. alopecia (hair loss),
11. menstrual disorders,
12. dizziness,
13. flu-like symptoms (cough, sore throat, pharyngitis, fever),
14. loss of appetite,
15. weight loss,
16. rapid weight gain,
17. euphoria,
18. hallucinations,
19. tremor (involuntary shaking movement),
20. depression,
21. paranoia,
22. insomnia,
23. the presence of blood in the stool or in the urine,
24. cold sweats,
25. encephalopathy (brain damage),
26. chest pain,
27. hot flushes,
28. loss of bladder control,
29. loss of muscle strength,
30. lack of energy,
31. frequent urination,
32. concentration problems,
33. jaundice-yellowing of the skin and eyes,
34. slow heartbeat,
35. memory loss,
36. dandruff,
37. dry skin,
38. Steven-Johnson syndrome,
39. allergy and others.

Tell your doctor if you are experiencing any side effects.