



## Valproate (Depakote)

The medication Valproate (**Depakote**) is used to treat seizure disorders. Many people have found it helpful for mood swings and anger control. For this reason, doctors sometimes prescribe it for these situations. Bipolar Disorder is frequently treated with Depakote.

The FDA has approved Depakote for the treatment of Bipolar Affective Disorder, mania and mixed states. In addition, Depakote is FDA approved for migraines and seizures.

Although Depakote can be very helpful, it can cause some side effects that you should know of before accepting treatment with it. These include: **sedation and weight gain: dry mouth and nausea.** These side effects most often occur with initial treatment with **Depakote** and can be managed. Yet sometimes they continue and require talking with your provider, who may stop the medication. If you become pregnant while taking Depakote let your providers know. You may need to take some time off of taking it and/or look into other options.

Depakote levels in your blood may be associated with therapeutic response. Your doctor may order a blood test of your Depakote level. Your provider may also check liver function tests, a complete blood count, and ammonia level as all of these values can be affected by Depakote. Typically dosage ranges of Depakote will depend on your weight, but common dosages include 1000 mg to 1500 mg/ day.

**Depakote** is generally safe with other medications. But it can impact the effect of other medications prescribed by a doctor, such as oral contraceptives (birth control pills). As with all medications, please let your provider know if you are engaged in other treatments. There are no dietary restrictions with Depakote.

Of course there are supplemental ways to improve mood which include:

- exercise
- good sleep habits
- good eating habits
- yoga
- a hobby
- visiting with family or friends
- fish oil

If you have further questions about this medication, please ask your medical provider or your pharmacist.

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