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SODIUM VALPROATE FOR MIGRAINE

What is Sodium Valproate?

Sodium Valproate is an anti-epileptic drug but is also widely used for the prevention of migraine.

How should I take it?

Start your tablets as shown below

	AM	PM
Week1	200mg	200mg
Week2	200mg	400mg
Week3	400mg	400mg
Week4	400mg	600mg
Week5	600mg	600mg

You do not need to increase the dose above any dose that helps to control the headaches that you have been getting.

What are its side effects?

You should contact your doctor immediately if you notice any side effects.

Some side effects that have been observed are: Liver dysfunction (rare), weight gain, transient hair loss, nausea, gastric irritation and diarrhoea. Valproate can also, but usually at higher doses than used in migraine result in abnormal eye movements, confusion, agitation, tremor, lethargy, mood disorder and menstrual pain in women.

In some cases your doctor may wish to check your blood before you start your tablets and after you have been on them for six months. It should be noted that although licensed for use in epilepsy, Sodium Valproate is not licensed for use in migraine although it is widely used by headache specialists.

Breastfeeding and pregnancy

You should not take this medication if you are planning a pregnancy. Sodium valproate has been shown to cause an increased rate of major fetal malformations in babies exposed to the drug in-utero as well as more subtle long term effects on brain development. The risk of its use for migraine during pregnancy out-weighs any benefit.

How long do I need to be on the tablets for?

You need to take the medication at the maximum dose you can tolerate for at least 8 weeks before a benefit can be judged. If there is a benefit then they should be taken for at least 4-6 months after which time you may like to discuss with your doctor whether you can withdraw them.

This leaflet is intended to provide a brief overview of aspects of this treatment protocol. It is not intended as a substitute for the comprehensive 'product information' leaflet found inside all boxes of medication. The 'product information' leaflet should always be read before taking medication. Your prescribing doctor will discuss the risks and benefits of the medication as it relates to you and answer any further questions you may have.

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