NHS
Greater Manchester
Integrated Care

Valproate

(Valproate is also called:
Sodium valproate, Epilim, Depakote, Convulex, Episenta, Epival, Kentlim, Orlept, Syonell, Valpal, Valproic Acid, Belvo and Dyzantil)

Easy Read

A guide for people who can become pregnant

Part of Greater Manchester Integrated Care Partnership

Version 6 - September 2023

What is Valproate?

1

Valproate (val-pro-ate) is a medicine.

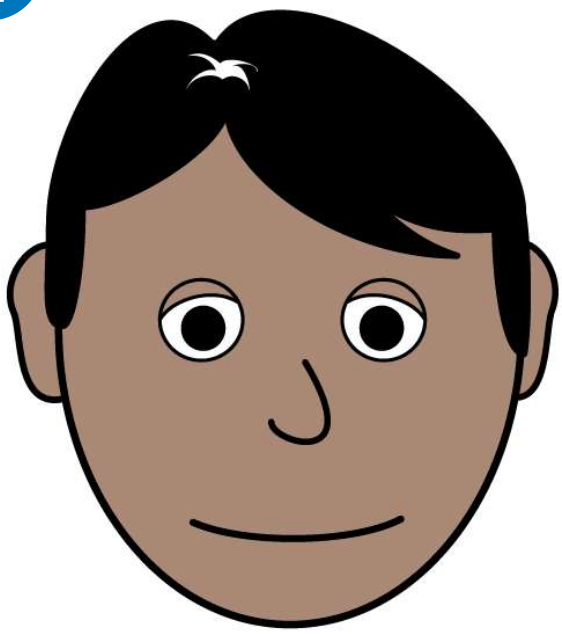
2

Valproate is used for seizures (or fits).

3

Valproate is used for keeping your mood stable.

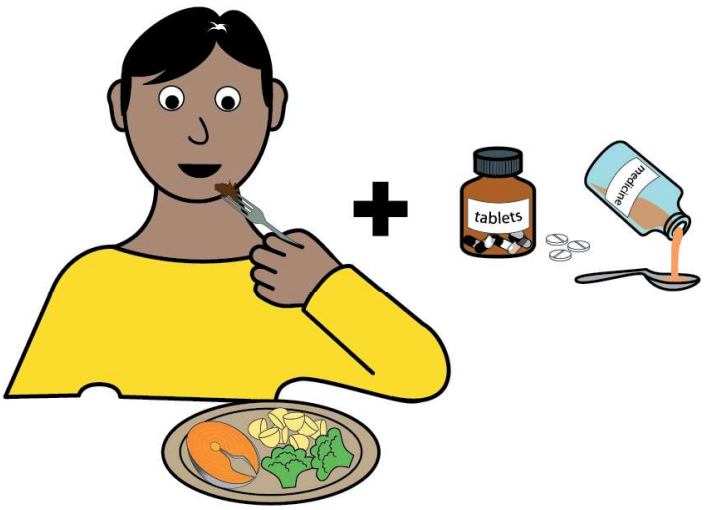
4



Valproate is used for making you feel calm.

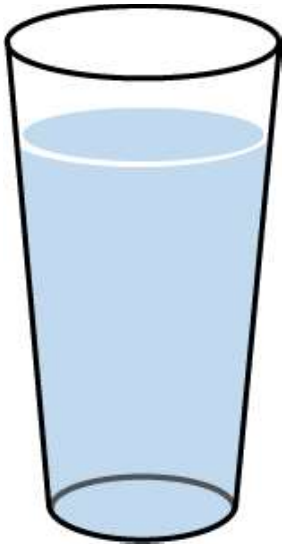
How do I take Valproate?

1



Take the Valproate with food or just after food.

2

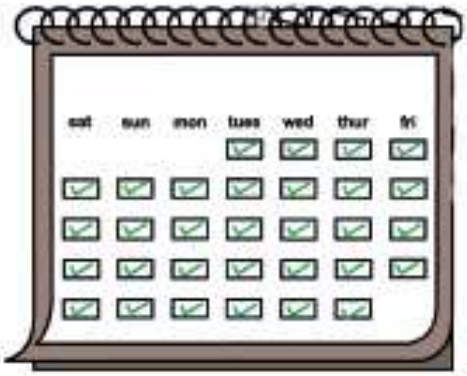


Take it with a glass of water.

3

Your valproate may be a liquid, a tablet or a granule. If you take tablets they should be swallowed whole and not chewed.

4



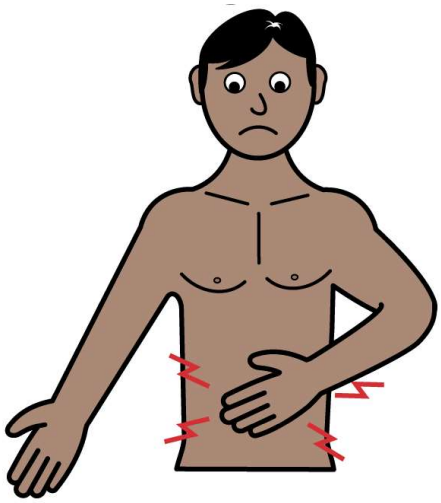
Remember to take it every day. Do not stop taking it unless your doctor or nurse tells you to.

How can it make me feel?

1 Sometimes Valproate can:

Make you feel sick.

2 Sometimes Valproate can:

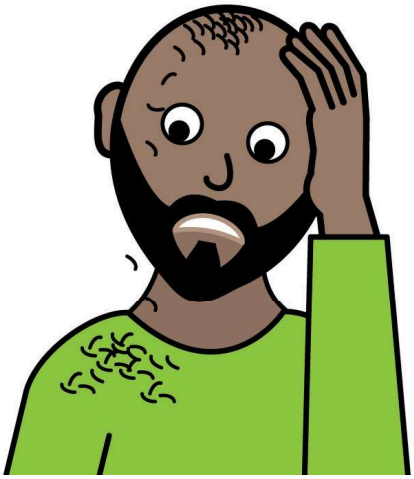


Give you tummy pain.

3 Sometimes Valproate can:

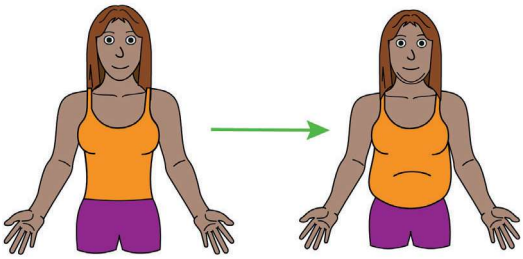
Make you sleepy.

4 Sometimes Valproate can:



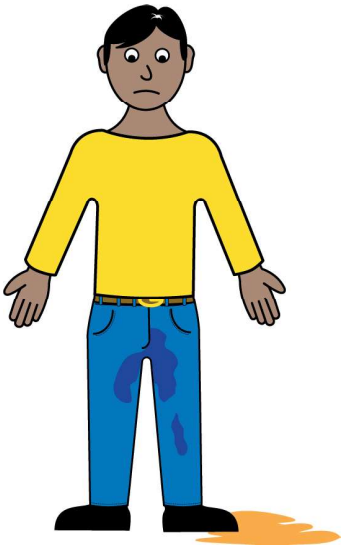
Make you loose your hair.

5 Sometimes Valproate can:



Make you put on weight.

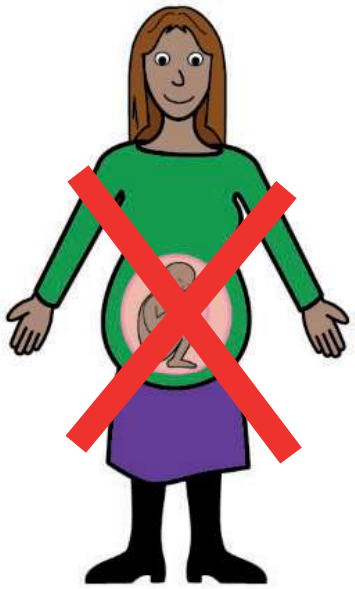
6 Sometimes Valproate can:



Make you wee when you do not want to.

What are the risks to the baby?

1

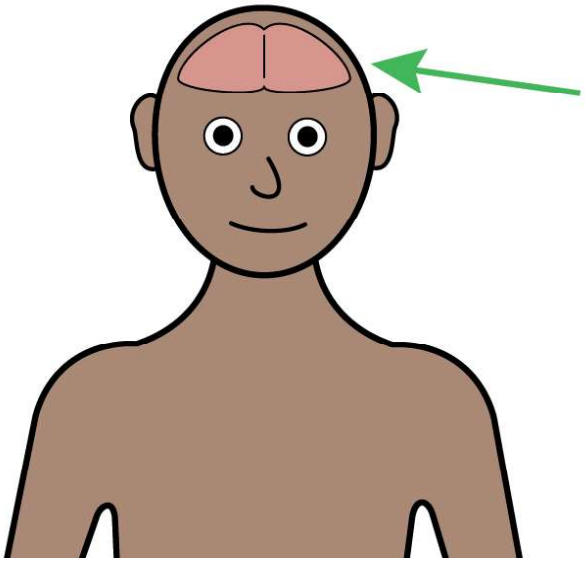


You **must not get pregnant** if you take Valproate.

2

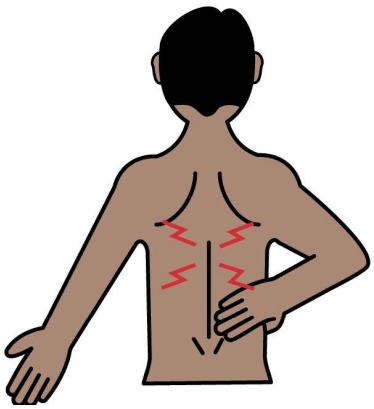
Valproate can harm the baby.

3



Problems to the unborn baby, such as a learning disability and/or autism

4



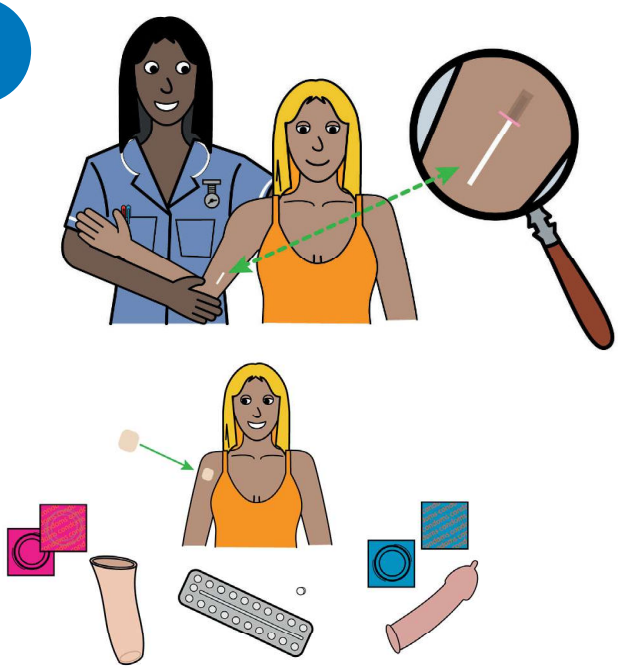
A problem with the baby's back called spina bifida. It is painful for the baby. They might need a wheelchair.

How can I stop getting pregnant?

1

You must use a good contraceptive. Contraceptives help to stop pregnancy.

2

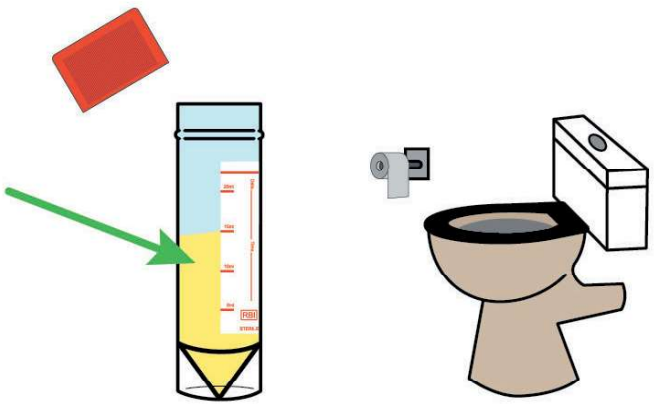


There are different types of contraceptive: coil or implant. Your doctor can help you choose the best contraceptive.

3

You must **always** use a contraceptive (even if you do not have sex.)

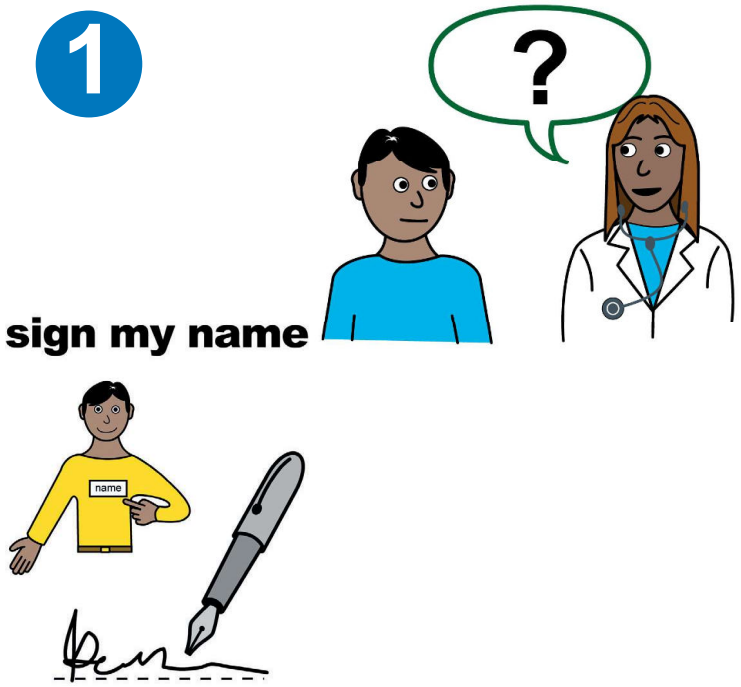
4



You might need to take a pregnancy test.

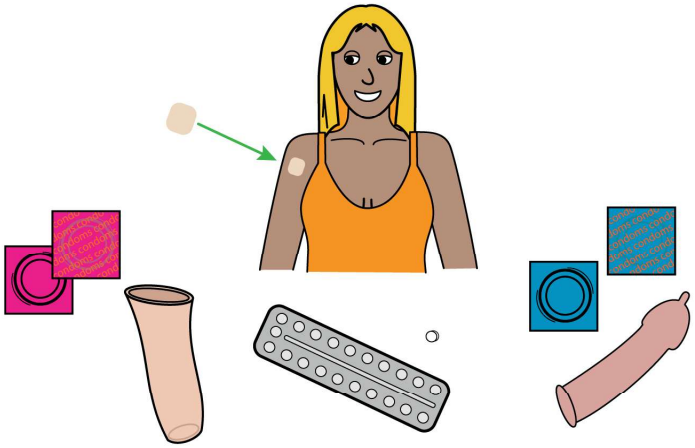
What do I need to do next?

1



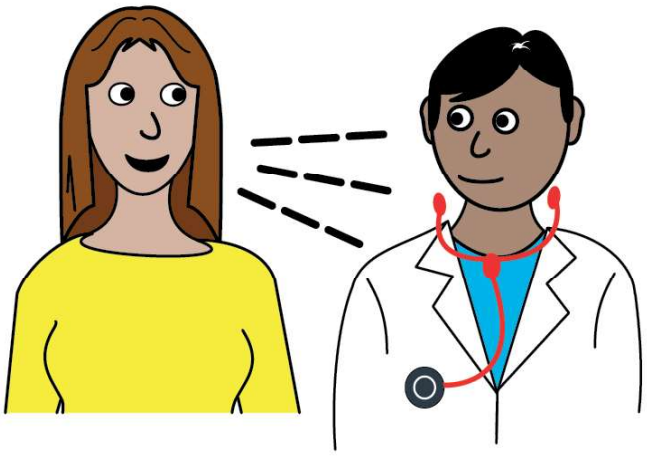
Every year you will be contacted to have a conversation about your Valproate with a doctor. You will be asked if you understand this information and sign your name if you are able to do so.

2



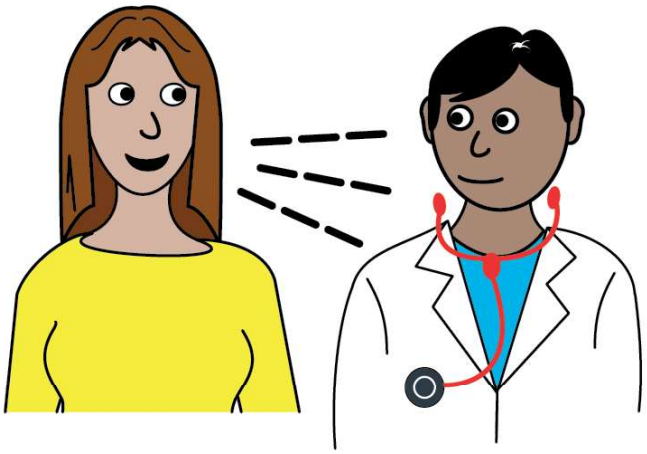
The conversation will also ask you about contraception. You will be advised to use contraception whether you expect to get pregnant or not.

3



If you are not currently using contraception, please contact your doctor and let them know.

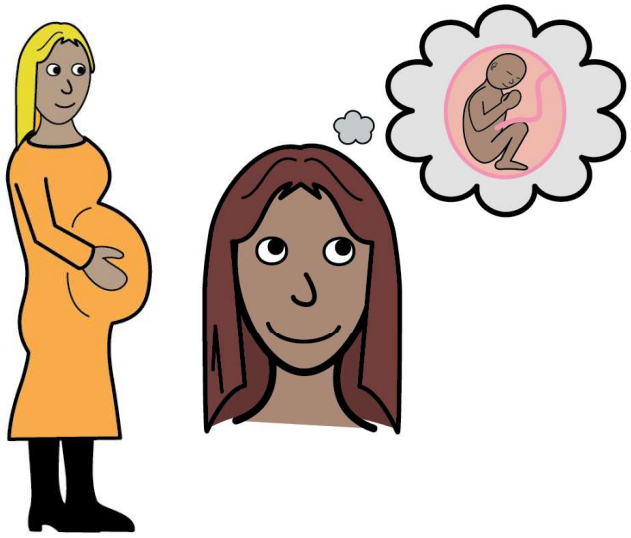
4



If you have not yet had a discussion about Valproate with your doctor, please let them know.

Some questions you may want to ask

1



What if I am pregnant or want to get pregnant?

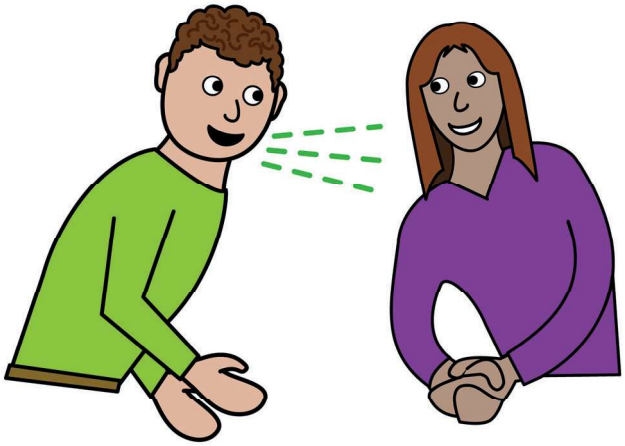
2

What if I want to stop Valproate?

3

What if I want to know more about Valproate?

4



What if I'm worried about taking Valproate? Can I talk to my doctor, carer or someone I trust?

carer find out more?

1

CLICK HERE

or visit

https://bit.ly/41DXsuA

Medicines and Healthcare Regulatory Agency Prevent Guide (2020):

2

CLICK HERE

or visit

https://bit.ly/2JN159H

Government guidance on valproate use by people who can become pregnant:

3

Bipolar UK — 0333 323 3880
Epilepsy Action — 0808 800 5050
Epilepsy Society — 01494 601 400
Mind — 0300 123 3393

Patient support networks can also provide advice:

4

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Thank you.