PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Desmopressin

This information from UpToDate® Lexidrug™ explains what you need to know about this medication, including what it's used for, how to take it, its side effects, and when to call your healthcare provider.

Brand Names: US

DDAVP; DDAVP Pf; Desmoda; Nocdurna [DSC]

Brand Names: Canada

APO-Desmopressin; Bipazen; DDAVP; DDAVP Melt; Octostim; PMS-Desmopressin

Warning

- This drug can cause low sodium levels. Very low sodium levels can be life-threatening, leading to seizures, passing out, trouble breathing, or death.
- Have your blood work and other lab tests checked as you have been told by your doctor.
- Talk with your doctor if you have an infection, a fever, diarrhea, or are throwing up. Talk with your doctor if you will be out in very hot weather, will be active, or will be changing how much water you drink for any reason.
- Talk with your doctor if you are taking any drugs that can raise the chance of low sodium levels. There are many drugs that can do this. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure.
- If you are 65 or older, use this drug with care. You could have more side effects.

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to help prevent bedwetting.
- It is used to treat a health problem called nocturnal polyuria that causes you to have to wake up at night to pass urine.
- It is used to treat central diabetes insipidus.
- It is used to treat hemophilia.
- It is used to treat von Willebrand disease.
- It may be given to you for other reasons. Talk with the doctor.

What do I need to tell my doctor BEFORE I take this drug?

All products:

- If you are allergic to this drug; any part of this drug; or any other drugs, foods, or substances. Tell your doctor about the allergy and what signs you had.
- If you have any of these health problems: Kidney disease, a risk of high pressure in the brain, or if you have ever had low sodium levels or trouble passing urine.
- If you have any of these health problems: Heart failure (weak heart), high blood pressure, or a health problem called syndrome of inappropriate antidiuretic hormone (SIADH) secretion.
- If you have type IIB von Willebrand disease.
- If you have a health problem that leads to sodium loss like adrenal gland problems, diarrhea, eating disorders like anorexia or bulimia, nausea, or vomiting that will not stop.
- If you are drinking more water than normal.

All nose products:

- If you have a runny or stuffy nose, scarring or swelling inside your nose, or other nose problems.
- If you have had any recent nose surgery, injury, ulcers, or sores, talk with your doctor.
- If you are using another drug in the nose.

This is not a list of all drugs or health problems that interact with this drug.

Tell your doctor and pharmacist about all of your drugs (prescription or OTC, natural products, vitamins) and health problems. You must check to make sure that it is safe for you to take this drug with all of your drugs and health problems. Do not start, stop, or change the dose of any drug without checking with your doctor.

What are some things I need to know or do while I take this drug?

All products:

- Tell all of your health care providers that you take this drug. This includes your doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- Very bad allergic reactions have rarely happened. Sometimes, allergic reactions have been deadly with the shot form of this drug. Talk with the doctor.
- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant, plan on getting pregnant, or are breast-feeding. You will need to talk about the benefits and risks to you and the baby.

Injection and nose spray (when used for bleeding problems):

- Call your doctor right away if you have unexplained bruising or bleeding or if bleeding does not stop after taking this drug. This may be a sign that your normal dose is not working as well.

Under the tongue (sublingual) tablet:

- This drug is not approved for use in children. Talk with the doctor.

All other products:

- If the patient is a child, use this drug with care. The risk of some side effects may be higher in children.

Oral solution:

- Drugs that have benzyl alcohol can cause severe and sometimes deadly side effects in newborns or infants. This drug has benzoic acid, which is a breakdown product of benzyl alcohol. Use this drug with care in newborns and infants. Talk with the doctor.

What are some side effects that I need to call my doctor about right away?

WARNING/CAUTION: Even though it may be rare, some people may have very bad and sometimes deadly side effects when taking a drug. Tell your doctor or get medical help right away if you have any of the following signs or symptoms that may be related to a very bad side effect:

All products:

- Signs of an allergic reaction, like rash; hives; itching; red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin with or without fever; wheezing; tightness in the chest or throat; trouble breathing, swallowing, or talking; unusual hoarseness; or swelling of the mouth, face, lips, tongue, or throat.
- Signs of low sodium levels like headache, trouble focusing, memory problems, feeling confused, weakness, seizures, or change in balance.
- Signs of high or low blood pressure like very bad headache or dizziness, passing out, or change in eyesight.
- Upset stomach or throwing up.
- Hallucinations (seeing or hearing things that are not there).
- Feeling dizzy, tired, or weak.
- Restlessness.
- Muscle weakness.
- Muscle spasm.
- Decreased appetite.
- Shortness of breath, a big weight gain, or swelling in the arms or legs.
- Swelling, warmth, numbness, change of color, or pain in a leg or arm.
- Chest pain or pressure, a fast heartbeat, or an abnormal heartbeat.
- Coughing up blood.
- Weakness on 1 side of the body, trouble speaking or thinking, change in balance, drooping on one side of the face, or blurred eyesight.

- Cold or pale skin.

Injection:

- Pain, swelling, or other reaction where the injection was given.

What are some other side effects of this drug?

All drugs may cause side effects. However, many people have no side effects or only have minor side effects. Call your doctor or get medical help if any of these side effects or any other side effects bother you or do not go away:

All products:

- Flushing.

Under the tongue (sublingual) tablet:

- Dry mouth.
- Dizziness.

All nose products:

- Runny or stuffy nose.
- Stomach pain or cramps.
- Cough.
- Nosebleed.
- Sore throat.
- Signs of a common cold.
- Headache.
- Eye redness.

These are not all of the side effects that may occur. If you have questions about side effects, call your doctor. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects.

You may report side effects to your national health agency.

You may report side effects to the FDA at 1-800-332-1088. You may also report side effects at https://www.fda.gov/medwatch.

How is this drug best taken?

Use this drug as ordered by your doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

All products:

- You may need to watch how much fluid you drink while taking this drug. Follow what your doctor has told you about how much fluid you can drink and how much physical activity you can have. If you have questions, talk with your doctor.

Oral solution:

- Take this drug on an empty stomach. Take at least 1 hour before or 2 hours after eating.
- Measure liquid doses carefully. Use the measuring device that comes with this drug. If there is none, ask the pharmacist for a device to measure this drug.

All other oral products:

- If using this drug for bedwetting or to prevent waking up at night to pass urine, empty your bladder right before bedtime. Do not drink alcohol or caffeine before bedtime. Follow what your doctor has told you to do about drinking fluids close to bedtime.

Tablets:

- If you take this drug for bedwetting, take it at bedtime.

Under the tongue (sublingual) tablet:

- Take this drug 60 minutes before bedtime.
- Do not push the tablet out of the foil when opening.
- Do not remove the tablet from the tablet pack until you are ready to put in this drug. Put in the tablet right away after opening the blister pack. Do not store the removed tablet for future use.
- Be sure your hands are dry before you touch this drug.
- Place under tongue and let dissolve all the way. Do not chew, suck or swallow tablet.

All nose products:

- Do not take this drug by mouth. Use in your nose only. Keep out of your mouth and eyes (may burn).
- Blow your nose before use.
- Some products may have different ways to prime the pump. Some pumps may also need to be primed if not used for different periods of time. Follow how and when to prime as you have been told.

Injection:

- It is given as a shot into a vein or into the fatty part of the skin.

What do I do if I miss a dose?

Injection:

- Call your doctor to find out what to do.

All other products:

- Take a missed dose as soon as you think about it.
- If it is close to the time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your normal time.

- Do not take 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.

How do I store and/or throw out this drug?

Oral solution:

- Store in a refrigerator or at room temperature.
- Do not freeze.
- Throw away any part not used 120 days after opening.

All other oral products:

- Store at room temperature in a dry place. Do not store in a bathroom.
- Protect from heat and light.

Under the tongue (sublingual) tablet:

- Store in original container.

Nose spray (for bleeding problems):

- Store upright at room temperature. Do not freeze.
- Some brands of this drug must be thrown away 90 days after opening. Some brands must be thrown away 6 months after opening. Write the date the container is opened on the container label. Be sure you know how long you can store your drug before it must be thrown away.

Nose products (diabetes insipidus):

- Some brands of this drug need to be stored in a refrigerator. Some brands of this drug need to be stored at room temperature. If you have questions about how to store this drug, talk with your pharmacist.
- Be sure you know how long you can store this drug before you need to throw it away.
- Store upright with the cap on.

Injection:

- If you need to store this drug at home, talk with your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist about how to store it.

All products:

- Keep all drugs in a safe place. Keep all drugs out of the reach of children and pets.
- Throw away unused or expired drugs. Do not flush down a toilet or pour down a drain unless you are told to do so. Check with your pharmacist if you have questions about the best way to throw out drugs. There may be drug take-back programs in your area.

General drug facts

- If your symptoms or health problems do not get better or if they become worse, call your doctor.
- Do not share your drugs with others and do not take anyone else's drugs.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. Check with your pharmacist. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
- This drug comes with an extra patient fact sheet called a Medication Guide. Read it with care. Read it again each time this drug is refilled. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with the doctor, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
- If you think there has been an overdose, call your poison control center or get medical care right away. Be ready to tell or show what was taken, how much, and when it happened.

Consumer Information Use and Disclaimer

This generalized information is a limited summary of diagnosis, treatment, and/or medication information. It is not meant to be comprehensive and should be used as a tool to help the user understand and/or assess potential diagnostic and treatment options. It does NOT include all information about conditions, treatments, medications, side effects, or risks that may apply to a specific patient. It is not intended to be medical advice or a substitute for the medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment of a health care provider based on the health care provider's examination and assessment of a patient's specific and unique circumstances. Patients must speak with a health care provider for complete information about their health, medical questions, and treatment options, including any risks or benefits regarding use of medications. This information does not endorse any treatments or medications as safe, effective, or approved for treating a specific patient. UpToDate, Inc. and its affiliates disclaim any warranty or liability relating to this information or the use thereof. The use of this information is governed by the Terms of Use, available at https://www.wolterskluwer.com/en/know/clinical-effectiveness-terms.

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If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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