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 child's blood work and other lab tests checked as you have been told by the doctor.
- Talk with the doctor if your child has an infection, a fever, diarrhea, or is throwing up. Talk with the doctor if your child will be out in very hot weather, will be active, or will be changing how much water they drink for any reason.
- Talk with your child's doctor if your child is taking any drugs that can raise the chance of low sodium levels. There are many drugs that can do this. Ask your child's doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure.

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to help prevent bedwetting.
- 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 your child for other reasons. Talk with the doctor.

Under the tongue (sublingual) tablet:

- This drug is not approved for use in children. However, the doctor may decide the benefits of taking this drug outweigh the risks. If your child has been given this drug, ask the doctor for information about the benefits and risks. Talk with the doctor if you have questions about giving this drug to your child.

What do I need to tell the doctor BEFORE my child takes this drug?

All products:

- If your child is allergic to this drug; any part of this drug; or any other drugs, foods, or substances. Tell the doctor about the allergy and what signs your child had.
- If your child has kidney disease, a risk of high pressure in the brain, or has ever had low sodium levels or trouble passing urine.
- If your child has 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 your child has type IIB von Willebrand disease.
- If your child has 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 your child is drinking more water than normal.

All nose products:

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

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

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

What are some things I need to know or do while my child takes this drug?

All products:

- Tell all of your child's health care providers that your child is taking this drug. This includes your child's 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.
- If the patient is a child, use this drug with care. The risk of some side effects may be higher in children.

If your child is pregnant or breast-feeding a baby:

- Talk with the doctor if your child is pregnant, becomes pregnant, or is breast-feeding a baby. You will need to talk about the benefits and risks to your child 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.

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 child's 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 child's doctor or get medical help right away if your child has 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.
- Muscle weakness.
- Muscle spasm.
- Feeling dizzy, tired, or weak.

- Hallucinations (seeing or hearing things that are not there).
- Restlessness.
- 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 child's doctor or get medical help if any of these side effects or any other side effects bother your child or do not go away:

All products:

- Flushing.

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 child's doctor. Call your child's doctor for medical advice about side effects.

You may report side effects to your national health agency.

How is this drug best given?

Give this drug as ordered by your child's doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

All products:

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

Tablets:

- If your child is using this drug for bedwetting, have your child empty the bladder right before bedtime. Do not let your child drink caffeine before bedtime. Follow what your child's doctor has told you to do about your child drinking fluids close to bedtime.
- If your child takes this drug for bedwetting, give it at bedtime.

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 nose products:

- Do not give this drug by mouth. Use in your child's nose only. Keep out of your child's mouth and eyes (may burn).
- Have your child blow 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 my child misses a dose?

Injection:

- Call your child's doctor to find out what to do.

All other products:

- Give a missed dose as soon as you think about it.
- If it is close to the time for your child's next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your child's normal time.
- Do not give 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.

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

Tablets:

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

Oral solution:

- Store in a refrigerator or at room temperature.
- Do not freeze.

- Throw away any part not used 120 days after opening.

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 child's 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 child's symptoms or health problems do not get better or if they become worse, call your child's doctor.
- Do not share your child's drug with others and do not give anyone else's drug to your child.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your child's doctor, nurse, 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.

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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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