

## Safety Alert

Dec 2024

### Valproate and increased risk of neurodevelopmental disorders (NDDs) in children born to men treated with valproate in the 3 months prior to conception

EDA performs label update to include the following:

#### Special warnings and precautions for use

##### Use in males of reproductive potential

A retrospective observational study indicates an increased risk of neurodevelopmental disorders (NDDs) in children born to men treated with valproate in the 3 months prior to conception, compared to those treated with lamotrigine or levetiracetam. Despite study limitations, by way of precaution, the prescriber should inform the male patients of this potential risk. The prescriber should discuss with the patient the need for effective contraception, including for the female partner, while using valproate and for 3 months after stopping the treatment. The risk to children born to men stopping valproate at least 3 months prior to conception (i.e., allowing a new spermatogenesis without valproate exposure) is not known.

##### The male patient should be advised:

- Not to donate sperm during treatment and for 3 months after stopping the treatment, of the need to consult his doctor to discuss alternative treatment options, as soon as he is planning to father a child, and before discontinuing contraception,
- That he and his female partner should contact their doctor for counselling in case of pregnancy if he used valproate within 3 months prior to conception. The male patient should also be informed about the need for regular (at least annual) review of treatment by a specialist experienced in the management of epilepsy or bipolar disorder. The specialist should at least annually review whether valproate is the most suitable treatment for the patient. During this review, the specialist should ensure the male patient has acknowledged the risk and understood the precautions needed with valproate use.

#### Background

##### Neurodevelopmental Disorders

Neurodevelopmental disorders are disabilities associated primarily with the functioning of the neurological system and brain. Examples of neurodevelopmental disorders in children include attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), autism, learning disabilities, intellectual disability (also known as mental retardation), conduct disorders, cerebral palsy, and impairments in vision and hearing. Children with neurodevelopmental disorders can experience difficulties with language and speech, motor skills, behavior, memory, learning, or other neurological functions. While the symptoms and behaviors of neurodevelopmental disabilities often change or evolve as a child grows older, some disabilities are permanent. Diagnosis and treatment of these disorders can be difficult; treatment often involves a combination of professional therapy, pharmaceuticals, and home- and school-based programs

##### References:

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