

# Your guide to Desmopressin

Information for patients, parents  
and carers



Leeds children's  
hospital

caring about children

**Desmopressin is a synthetic substance which has actions similar to an anti-diuretic hormone (ADH) produced naturally in the body.**

One of its actions is to reduce the amount of urine produced by the body. At much higher doses, Desmopressin increases the levels of some of the factors which help the blood clotting process to work more effectively.

Desmopressin is used for patients with mild haemophilia and certain types of von Willebrands disease.

Desmopressin raises the FVIII levels three/fourfold, within 30-60 minutes and lasts for 8-10 hours. It can be given on successive days (usually 3-4) before the response becomes temporarily exhausted.

## **How it is given**

Desmopressin when given in hospital is usually given intravenously (into a vein) via a drip, over 30 minutes or subcutaneously (an injection under the skin).

If it is likely to be given at home however, Desmopressin can be given either as a subcutaneous injection or intra nasally (sprayed into the nose).

## **Before treatment**

If the answer to any of the following questions is **YES** you should tell the doctor or nurse before you receive the medicine.

### ***Are you or your child:***

- Suffering from Type IIb von Willebrands disease?
- Suffering from a serious heart or kidney disease?
- Suffering from difficulty passing water?
- Pregnant or breast feeding?
- Drinking large amounts during the day or night?
- Taking medication for high blood pressure or have been told that your blood pressure is abnormal?
- Taking any other medicines including over-the-counter medicines?
- On medication for depression or epilepsy?
- Taking diuretics (water tablets)?

Taking a medicine for pain or inflammation containing non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), eg indomethacin?

### **Precautions and warnings**

Desmopressin makes your body hold on to fluids. It is therefore important to reduce fluid intake for a period of 24 hours.

#### ***The recommended maximum fluid intake during this time is:***

- 2-4 years: 750mls
- 5-10 years: 1 litre
- Over 10 years: 1.5 litres

The reason for restricting fluids following Desmopressin is to prevent an imbalance of salts (hyponatraemia) in the blood which rarely can cause fitting.

***If any of the following symptoms occur following treatment with Desmopressin you should avoid drinking any more fluid and contact the doctor or the nearest casualty department at once:***

- Fitting
- Unexplained weight loss
- An unusually bad or prolonged headache
- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Confusion
- Not passing urine for longer than six hours.

## **Side-effects**

Patients often become hot and flushed; eyes may appear watery or bloodshot. These symptoms usually subside quickly once the treatment is complete.

Less common side effects are an increased heart rate, alterations in blood pressure, headache, stomach pain and nausea.

If you experience any of these side-effects or any other undesirable effect please tell the doctor or nurse.



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