



## Hepatotoxicity

### Liver with Toxic-green-glow

Valproic acid may cause hepatotoxicity and liver failure. Do not administer this medication to children under 2 years old or to patients with a history of liver dysfunction. The patient's liver function should be assessed periodically after initiating therapy. Instruct the patient to contact their physician if experiencing symptoms such as anorexia, fatigue, nausea, abdominal pain, or jaundice.

## Blood Dyscrasias

### Blood-cell Disc-razor

Valproic acid may cause blood dyscrasias such as anemia, leukopenia, and thrombocytopenia. Assess the patient's RBC, WBC, and platelet counts before and periodically after therapy. A decreased number of platelets may cause prolonged bleeding time. Minimize these effects by administering the lowest effective dosage of valproic acid.

## GI Distress

### GI with Flare-gun

Since valproic acid is absorbed in the GI tract, GI distress is a common side effect of valproic acid. Symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, and indigestion may be prevented by administering an enteric-coated form of valproic acid with food. Since weight gain is a common side effect, advise the patient to exercise and consume a reduced-calorie diet.

## Tremor

### Trimmer

This drug may cause tremors during its peak effect. Anxiety or stimulants may worsen tremors. Patients who develop a rash may be allergic to this drug and should contact their physician immediately.

## Pancreatitis

### Pancreas-on-fire

Valproic acid may cause pancreatitis that can result in hemorrhage and death. Instruct the patient to contact their healthcare provider, if experiencing symptoms of abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, or anorexia (Refer to the Picmonic of Acute Pancreatitis Assessment). The medication should be discontinued and substituted with an alternative drug.