

VALPROIC ACID (Depakote) Side Effects:

Most common: sleepiness, nausea, fatigue, dizziness, hair loss, tremor, low platelets (up to 24% of patients; dose-related).

Serious but rare: liver toxicity (rare unpredictable reaction, not dose-related; most cases occur within 3 months; risk factors: age <2 years, multiple anticonvulsants, and presence of neurologic disease in addition to epilepsy). Asymptomatic elevations of liver enzymes may occur, not necessarily associated with liver dysfunction. Pancreatitis (rare but potentially fatal). Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) in about 10% of women.

Pregnancy: Most likely to cause birth defects of all mood stabilizers, with a 6.2%–20.3% rate of birth defects, with neural tube defects most prominent. Teratogenic effects are dose-related with greatest risk at doses >1000 mg per day.

This is a simplified list of side effects focusing on what is common or severe because complete lists of more rare and less serious side effects are often overwhelming. If desired, complete lists of potential side effects can be found on reputable web sites like Drugs.com.