

Diastat®/ Diazepam (Rectal Gel)

What is Diastat®/ Diazepam (Rectal Gel)?

Diastat®, released in 1998, is used to control clusters of seizures. It is similar to other benzodiazepines (Valium), but the rectal formulation is more convenient for patients who cannot swallow pills after seizures. It can be used for patients with any epilepsy who require medications to stop flurries of seizures.

Starting the Medication:

The medication is not recommended for chronic use. You will receive instructions from your doctor about how and when to use the rectal preparation, usually related to the length or frequency of seizures in a cluster.

What is the dosage of the medicine and what does it look like?

It is a gel supplied in a plastic applicator, in strengths of 2.5mg, 5 mg, 10mg, 15mg and 20 mg dosages based on patient's weight, other medications and previous experience.

What Side Effects Can Be Caused by Diastat?

Side Effects can be dose related (common) or Idiosyncratic (rare):

Common Dose-Related Side Effects:

Sedation is by far the most common and most severe side effect: some patients are sleepy for up to one day. Headache, diarrhea and dizziness can also occur. There is significant risk of habituation and addiction if this medication is taken

chronically, and risk of worsening seizures if the medication is abruptly withdrawn after chronic use.

If you have these side effects, your doctor may:

- ask you to reduce the dose
- find another medication to use for seizure clusters

Rare Side Effects:

In some patients, Diastat could paradoxically cause agitation, anxiety or hallucinations. Large doses of similar agents have sometimes caused patients to faint. If respirations slow down severely (<10/minute) urgent evaluation is necessary. These problems are not expected and have not yet been reported at prescribed doses of Diastat.

Skin Rash:

An allergic rash can occur with Diastat. It tends to occur early in therapy. If this occurs, contact your doctor immediately.

Pregnancy:

Women of child-bearing age should be aware that there is an increase in risk for congenital malformations taking this medication. Cleft palate and changes in the lining of the brain have been reported with similar agents. This risk increases in women taking more than one anti-epileptic drug. Discuss this with your doctor.

How do I take this medication?

It is important to take to medication as soon as possible during an identified cluster. For instance, if your doctor has instructed you to take the medicine after two seizures, it should be administered within 15 minutes of the second

seizure if possible. Diastat should not be taken daily. If it is needed more than twice a week please discuss this with you doctor.

Can I Take Diastat with Other Medications?

Yes, Diastat® may be taken with most medications. However, mixing the medication with alcohol or sedatives (strong pain medicines, medicines for nausea or hallucinations) is strongly discouraged as these medications may worsen the sedative and breathing effects. Tagamet and Depakote may also worsen the degree of sleepiness experienced. Always tell your doctor what other medicines you are taking.

What Should I Do If the Cluster Continues?

Any patient who has a single seizure lasting 30 minutes, or does not resume some conscious interaction after a cluster for 45 minutes requires immediate emergency room attention.

Disclaimer: This document contains information and/or instructional materials developed by the University of Michigan Health System (UMHS) for the typical patient with your condition. It may include links to online content that was not created by UMHS and for which UMHS does not assume responsibility. It does not replace medical advice from your health care provider because your experience may differ from that of the typical patient. Talk to your health care provider if you have any questions about this document, your condition or your treatment plan.

Patient Education by [University of Michigan Health System](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License](#). Last Revised 11/2016