

Desmopressin (DDAVP) at Home

This leaflet explains more about using desmopressin (DDAVP) at home, including the benefits, risks and any alternatives and what you can expect when you come to hospital. If you have any further questions, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.

What is DDAVP?

DDAVP is a man-made hormone used to boost clotting factor in your blood for a short time.

It does this by releasing your body's stores of von Willebrand factor and Factor VIII.

DDAVP is given by injection.

What are von Willebrand factor and Factor VIII?

Von Willebrand factor (vWF) makes parts of your blood (the platelets) stick to areas of blood vessels that are damaged. If you don't have enough vWF, platelets can't stick properly and any bleeding will last longer.

Factor VIII is needed for your blood to make clots to stop any bleeding.

Why should I have DDAVP?

DDAVP is used to treat mild bleeding disorders.

You should only be given DDAVP to use at home if you have had a test dose first in the hospital.

DDAVP is most commonly used to treat nosebleeds and heavy menstrual bleeding. It can also be used for other bleeding episodes and to prevent bleeding when given before procedures such as dental extractions.

How do I store DDAVP?

DDAVP should be stored in a fridge and used before the expiry date (shown on the ampoule).

If kept out of the fridge the expiry date will be shortened, so please contact your haemophilia nurse or hospital pharmacist for advice if you can't keep your DDAVP in a fridge.

What equipment will I need?

You will be given the following equipment by the haemophilia centre:

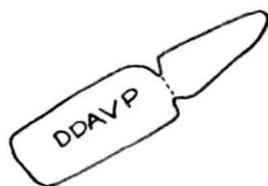
- syringes
- needles
- DDAVP 15mcg ampoules (one ampoule is normally needed per treatment, the haemophilia team will let you know if not)
- sharps bin (yellow bin).

How do I inject DDAVP?

The haemophilia nurses will show you how to find the best place for your injection and how to inject your DDAVP. This leaflet gives you a reminder.

Please contact the haemophilia nurses on 020 8725 0763 if you have any questions about how or when to inject DDAVP.

1. Get all of your equipment ready on a clean surface: needles, syringe, DDAVP ampoule and sharps bin.
2. Check the DDAVP has not expired.
3. Wash your hands with soap and water and dry with a clean towel.
4. There is no need to clean the injection site unless it is visibly dirty - clean your skin with soap and water if so.
5. Open the packets of a new syringe and a new red needle.
6. Hold the capped (red) needle and push it firmly onto the tip of the syringe.
7. Hold the DDAVP ampoule and shake or tap all the liquid to the bottom.
8. Identify the spot on the top of the ampoule, apply pressure here and snap off the top.



9. Put the glass top in the sharps bin.
10. Pull off the cap from the needle and syringe - do not touch the needle.
11. Put the tip of the needle into the bottom of the ampoule and pull back the plunger to fill the syringe - making sure all the fluid has gone from the ampoule into the syringe.
12. Remove the needle and put it and the empty ampoule into the sharps bin.
13. Open the packet with the orange needle (23g) and attach it firmly to the syringe.
14. Hold the syringe upright and gently tap it, so any air bubbles collect at the top, then gently push the plunger to remove the air.

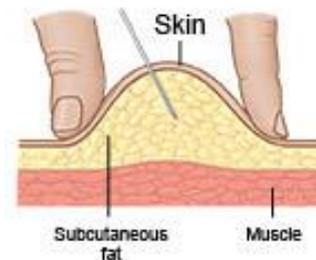
15. If you need more than one ampoule, repeat with a new needle and syringe - making sure you have the right dose.
16. Put your needle and syringe onto a clean surface.
17. Sit down if you are injecting yourself. If you are injecting someone else, make sure they are sitting down.



Subcutaneous Injection



Pinch and inject



18. Grasp the injection site firmly, pinching about 2-3cm of skin - avoid the belly button.
19. With a quick darting motion insert the needle into the skin; at an angle of 45°.
20. Slowly push the plunger until it stops and all fluid has been injected.
21. Release your grasp of the skin.
22. Remove the needle from the skin.
23. Throw away the used needle and syringe in the sharps bin.
24. Make a note of this injection (date, time and reason for injection) in your treatment records.

What are the risks?

Possible side effects include:

- facial flushing or warmth
- headache
- low blood pressure
- fluid retention
- nausea
- allergic skin reaction (rare)
- fits (rare).

Remember to limit your fluid intake to one litre for 24 hours after a DDAVP injection. If the DDAVP does not control your bleeding you should contact the haemophilia team for advice. DO NOT REPEAT THE INJECTION WITHIN SEVEN DAYS WITHOUT ADVICE FROM THE HAEMOPHILIA TEAM.

Useful sources of information

The Haemophilia Society is a UK wide charity for everyone affected by a bleeding disorder:

Website: www.haemophilia.org.uk

Email: info@haemophilia.org.uk

Freephone: 0800 018 6068.

World Federation of Hemophilia:

website: www.wfh.org

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about the DDAVP test, please contact the haemophilia team on 020 8725 0763 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 5pm). Out of hours, please contact the hospital switchboard on 020 8672 1255 and ask for the on-call haematology registrar.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.stgeorges.nhs.uk

Additional services

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you on-the-spot advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or the care you have received. You can visit the PALS office between 9.30am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough wings (near the lift foyer).

Tel: 020 8725 2453 **Email:** pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk

NHS Choices

NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.

Web: www.nhs.uk

NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

Tel: 111

AccessAble

You can download accessibility guides for all of our services by searching 'St George's Hospital' on the AccessAble website (www.accessable.co.uk). The guides are designed to ensure everyone – including those with accessibility needs – can access our hospital and community sites with confidence.

References

World Federation of Hemophilia. (2013) Guidelines for management of haemophilia. Available from: www.wfh.org

Laffan, M.A., Lester, W., O'Donnell, J.S., Will, A., Tait, R.C., Goodeve, A., Millar, C.M., Keeling, D.M. (2014) The diagnosis and management of von Willebrand disease: a United Kingdom Haemophilia Centre Doctors Organisation guideline approved by the British Committee for Standards in Haematology. British Journal of Haematology. 167 (4), 453-465.



Reference: CLH_DMH_02 **Published:** September 2019 **Review date:** September 2021