

Diabetes Insipidus

Diabetes insipidus is a condition that happens when the kidneys are not able to hold onto the water in your blood. This usually happens because there is not enough of a certain type of hormone produced by your pituitary gland: the anti-diuretic hormone (ADH). It is important to know that Diabetes Insipidus is *not* the same as Diabetes Mellitus, which has high blood sugar levels.

What causes diabetes insipidus?

Diabetes insipidus is usually caused by a problem in the pituitary gland. The lack of ADH leads to increased urination which causes thirst. It can also be caused from a problem in the kidneys. You may be at risk of developing diabetes insipidus if you have:

- A pituitary disorder
- Had a recent surgery involving the pituitary gland

What are the symptoms of diabetes insipidus?

The most common symptoms are thirst and frequent urination. People with diabetes insipidus have to use the bathroom nearly every hour, even at night. The urine is clear and there is a large amount each time. Because people with diabetes insipidus urinate often, they tend to drink large amounts of water or liquids to avoid dehydration. This can be very bothersome for those with the condition.

How is it treated?

Your doctor may prescribe medications to treat your diabetes insipidus. One type is called desmopressin, or DDAVP. DDAVP is a medication that is very much like the ADH hormone that was produced in the pituitary gland. It comes in several forms such as:

- **Nasal spray:** This is a medication that you squirt into your nose. It is taken at bedtime so that you can sleep through the night. Some people also need a daytime dose.
- **Rhinal Tube Solution:** This form must be stored in the refrigerator. A small tube is used to give the drug in your nose. It may be slightly harder to use than the nasal spray. This form may be better for you if your schedule changes daily or if you only need a small amount of the drug. Both this and the nasal spray quickly go into your blood from your nose and treat your symptoms quickly.
- **Pills:** Taking this drug may be best for you if you have just had pituitary surgery. The pills tend to work well for most patients, though they do not take effect as quickly.

Your Medication is: _____

How do I take my medication?

You may take it at bedtime so that you can sleep more comfortably. If you have symptoms during the day, you may also take a dose then. The medicine may work differently if you are sick, such as if you have a stuffy nose and are taking the spray. You do not have to take your medicine at the same time each day. These are signs that it is time to take another dose of your medicine:

1. Using the restroom often
2. Your urine is clear like water
3. You are thirsty

It is important to remember to listen to your body when you take your medicine. The medicine treats the symptoms. If you are thirsty, drink fluids until you are satisfied. Do not drink if you are not thirsty. Using the medicine when you don't need it can lead to a serious condition called hyponatremia (low blood sodium). This can seriously affect your health. It can even be life threatening. Call your doctor if you experience these symptoms:

- Decreased urination
- Decreased thirst
- Headache
- Nausea
- Fatigue
- Confusion

For some patients, they cannot tell if they are thirsty. If this applies to you, then your doctor will tell you at what times to take your medicine. They will also tell you how much water to drink and to weigh yourself every day.

Taking the medication should not get in the way with what you do on a daily basis. You should feel comfortable managing your symptoms. Always remember the signs and symptoms and contact your healthcare team if you have any questions.

How should I take my medication if I get sick or have a medical procedure?

You may need more or less medication when you are sick. Only take your medicine when you need it.

If you are having a medical procedure, be sure to tell your doctor that you have this condition,

especially if it requires you to be put to sleep or given an IV. If you have symptoms of increased thirst or urination after the medical procedure, be sure to tell your health care team.

Do I need medical identification?

It is a good idea to wear a medical alert bracelet or tag and have an emergency identification card. They should state that you have Diabetes Insipidus. You may also want to add any other conditions for which you are being treated. Be sure to include the telephone number for your primary care doctor and your endocrinologist along with emergency contact information. *Medic Alert* is a company that supplies these types of bracelets. Their contact information is:
www.medicalert.org (888) 633-4298

What should I do if I travel?

When you travel always carry extra medications with you. When traveling in the airport, you may have to present your liquid medication separately and clearly labeled with your doctor's prescription. If you are using the rhinal tube, it needs to be kept cool.

Endocrine Center

Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
713-563-7600

After business hours and weekends, you may call the hospital page operator at 713-792-7090 and ask for the on-call endocrinology fellow.

Internal Medicine Center

Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
713-792-2340