

# **Diabetes Insipidus**

**Series N. 12**



**Patient's Guide**

**Easy Readability Leaflet**

## **Diabetes Insipidus - Series 12 (Revised August 2006)**

This leaflet was produced by Fernando Vera MSc and Prof Gary Butler at the Institute of Health Sciences, University of Reading, Reading, UK (August, 2006). Some portions of the text were extracted or modified from the Growth and Growth Disorders Booklet Series (Third edition, 2000)\* and may be used in conjunction with these as they provide a choice of leaflets providing the same information, but for people of different ages and reading abilities. The numbering sequence in each series is the same for easy cross-reference. The original leaflet series can be also obtained from the links given at the end.

All illustrations were created and produced by Fernando Vera MSc.

This leaflet is part of the Hormone Disorders Leaflet Series. The following are also available:

- Series N 3.** Puberty and the Growth Hormone Deficient Child.
- Series N 4.** Precocious Puberty
- Series N 5.** Emergency Information for Children with Cortisol and GH Deficiencies and those Experiencing Recurrent Hypoglycaemia.
- Series N 6.** Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia
- Series N 7.** Growth Hormone Deficiency in Young Adults.
- Series N 10.** Constitutional delay of growth and puberty
- Series N 11.** Multiple Pituitary Hormone Deficiency
- Series N 12.** Diabetes Insipidus
- Series N 13.** Craniopharyngioma
- Series N 14.** Intrauterine Growth Retardation or Small Gestational Age
- Series N 15.a.** Hyperthyroidism
- Series N 15.b.** Hypothyroidism
- Series N. 16.** Type 2 Diabetes and Obesity

The development of these leaflets was funded (as a service to medicine) by Serono-Merck Ltd, Bedfont Cross, Stanwell Road, Feltham, Middlesex TW14 8NX, UK. Additional help was provided by the Child Growth Foundation ([www.childgrowthfoundation.org](http://www.childgrowthfoundation.org)).

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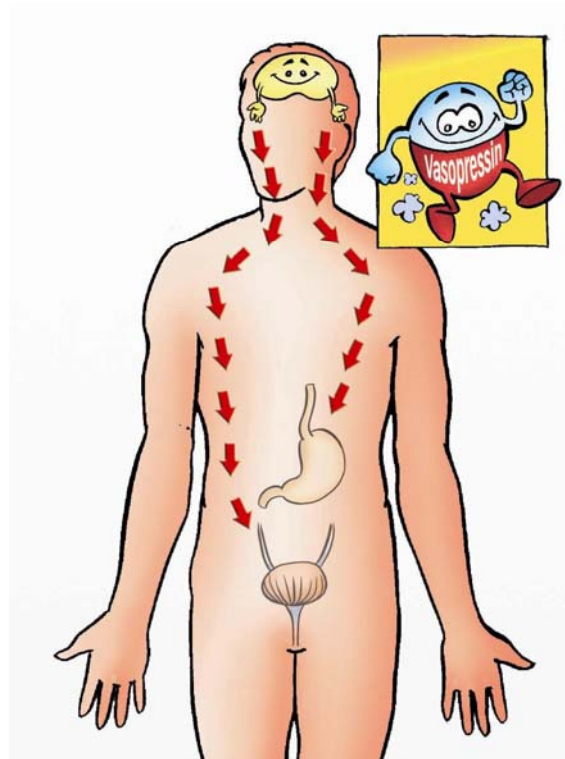
## Hello!

Today we'll tell you about **Diabetes insipidus**, but commonly called "**Water Diabetes**". You may think that it sounds a bit difficult, but do not worry! We'll tell you what it means, why it happens and how doctors treat it.

But first, let's talk a bit about your body...

The brain is a very important organ. It acts like the "boss" by ordering other organs to do small jobs. One of these jobs is to keep a good control of your body's water balance.

Your brain does this by making and sending special messengers called **Vasopressin** to the other organs. Vasopressin tells organs when to hold or when to get rid of water by making you go to the toilet.



## What is water diabetes?

As you know, Vasopressin is made in the brain. Sometimes the brain does not make or send Vasopressin. This means that your body will not be able to keep a good water balance. This is called **Water Diabetes**.

Water diabetes is not the same as the more common "sugar diabetes".

## What causes water diabetes?

Water diabetes occurs when some parts of the brain are not working normally. This damage could have been caused by a small tumour in the brain. It could also happen after a brain operation. Most of the time it's because these parts in the brain stop working.

## What does water diabetes feel like?

Water diabetes will often make you feel two things:

- You'll feel a need to go to the toilet frequently.
- You'll feel very thirsty during the day and probably will want to drink loads of water.

## How can I know if I have water diabetes?

Doctors will tell you if you have water diabetes. They will do a test if they think you have it. In this test, doctors will take a bit of your blood and collect a bit of urine very early in the morning.

Another test may be done in hospital, and you may need to stay overnight for this.

## How is water diabetes treated?

As you know, water diabetes happens when the brain cannot make Vasopressin. To fix this lack, doctors will give you DDAVP in either tablets, spray or in drops. It is very important that you take the amount of DDAVP indicated by your doctor.



## What happens if I don't feel thirsty?

Some people with water diabetes also have a problem with not feeling thirsty. This is risky for these people because even though the body needs water, they will not feel thirsty!

If you have this problem, the doctor will tell you to drink a certain amount of water even if you don't feel thirsty. You will need to drink this amount of water everyday. You will also need to drink more water when it is very hot.



**Congratulations!**

Now you know about water diabetes, why it happens and how it's treated. If you have not understood some things in this leaflet, don't feel shy to ask your doctor or other friendly people in the hospital. They will happily explain these or any other doubts you may have.

