

MEDICINE INFORMATION

Epsom salts

(Magnesium Sulfate)

Powder or crystals

What are Epsom salts used for?

Epsom salts (magnesium sulfate) is sometimes used for short-term relief of constipation. It generally produces bowel movement within 30 minutes to 6 hours.

Epsom salts are recommended for short-term use only. If constipation persists, see your doctor.

Long-term and excessive use of Epsom salts should be avoided as it can cause an imbalance of salts in the body, muscle weakness, and kidney problems.

When you must not use Epsom salts.

Do not use Epsom salts if you have ever had any unusual or allergic reaction to this or any other medicines.

Do not use Epsom salts if you have, or have had, any of the following conditions:

- an acute abdominal condition including appendicitis
- acute inflammatory bowel disease
- severe abdominal pain associated with nausea and vomiting
- blockage of the bowel (ileus)
- a blockage of the intestine
- severe dehydration

If you are uncertain as to whether you have, or have had any of these conditions, you should check first with your doctor.

Check with your doctor first

If your symptoms do not improve within a few days or if they become worse, check with your doctor.

Before using Epsom salts, **talk to your doctor first if you:**

- are pregnant or breastfeeding.
- have noticed a sudden change in bowel habits that has continued for more than two weeks.
- have stomach pain, nausea, or vomiting.
- are on a magnesium-restricted diet.
- have already used a laxative for longer than a week.

Stop using Epsom salts and check with your doctor if you have rectal bleeding or do not have a bowel movement after use.

Check with your doctor or pharmacist first if you are taking any other medicines, especially:

- **diuretics, e.g. frusemide (medicines that increase urine)**
- **corticosteroids, e.g. prednisone**
- **medicines that stimulate the heart, e.g. digoxin**

It is important to discuss this with your doctor or pharmacist because side effects may be increased or Epsom salts may not work as well when taken with some medicines.

Taking Epsom salts may cause some unwanted effects. Although not all of these side effects may occur, if they do occur you may need medical attention. Check with your doctor immediately if any of the following side effects occur:

- **confusion**
- **dizziness or lightheadedness**
- **fast, slow, or irregular heartbeat**
- **low blood pressure**
- **muscle weakness**
- **sleepiness**
- **ongoing diarrhoea**

Other side effects not listed may also occur in some patients. If you notice any other effects, check with your doctor.

Proper use of Epsom salts

USE EPSOM SALTS ONLY AS DIRECTED BY YOUR DOCTOR.

Epsom salt should not be used in place of medication prescribed for you by your doctor.

Do not use more of it, do not use it more often, and do not use it for a longer time than your doctor ordered.

Dosing

The dose of Epsom salts will vary from person to person. Talk to your doctor to ensure you have the right dose.

Storage

- Keep out of sight and reach of children.
- Do not keep outdated Epsom salts or supplies that are no longer needed.
- Ask your pharmacist how you should dispose of any epsom salts you do not use.
- Store Epsom salts in a closed container at room temperature, away from heat, moisture, and direct light. Keep from freezing.
- If the powder has settled and formed a thick layer, gently tap the carton to free the granules