

## **PRODUCT MONOGRAPH**

### **PrAPO-DICLO**

Diclofenac Sodium Enteric Coated Tablets  
25 mg and 50 mg

### **PrAPO-DICLO SR**

Diclofenac Sodium Slow Release Tablets  
75 mg and 100 mg

Acetic Acid Derivatives and Related Substances

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## PART I: HEALTH PROFESSIONAL INFORMATION

### SUMMARY PRODUCT INFORMATION

Route of Administration	Dosage Form / Strength	All Nonmedicinal Ingredients
Oral	Enteric Coated Tablets, 25 mg, 50 mg	colloidal silicon dioxide, dextrans, D&C yellow #10 (25 mg tablet), FD & C yellow #6, ferric oxide yellow, hydroxypropyl methylcellulose, methanol, magnesium stearate, methylcellulose, polyethylene glycol, polyvinylacetate phthalate stearic acid, titanium dioxide and triethyl citrate.
	Slow-release Tablets, 75 mg, 100 mg	dextrans, ferric oxide red, hydroxyethyl cellulose, hydroxypropyl methylcellulose, magnesium stearate, microcrystalline cellulose, polyethylene glycol and titanium dioxide.

### INDICATIONS AND CLINICAL USE

APO-DICLO (diclofenac sodium) and APO-DICLO SR (diclofenac sodium) are indicated for:

- the symptomatic treatment of rheumatoid arthritis and osteoarthritis, including degenerative joint disease of the hip.

*Throughout this document, the term Nonsteroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drug (NSAID) refers to both non-selective NSAIDs and selective COX-2 inhibitor NSAIDs, unless otherwise indicated.*

**Diclofenac, particularly at higher doses, is associated with an increased risk of serious cardiovascular related adverse events that is comparable to COX-2 inhibitors. For patients with pre-existing risk factors for cardiovascular disease (including ischemic heart disease, cerebrovascular disease and/or congestive heart failure NYHA II-IV) other management strategies that do not include NSAIDs, particularly COX-2 inhibitors and diclofenac, should be considered first (see CONTRAINDICATIONS and WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS).**

**For patients with increased risk of developing GI adverse events other management strategies that do not include NSAIDs should be considered first (see CONTRAINDICATIONS and WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS).**

**Use of APO-DICLO or APO-DICLO SR should be limited to the lowest effective dose for the shortest possible duration of treatment in order to minimize the potential risk for cardiovascular or gastrointestinal adverse events (see CONTRAINDICATIONS and WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS).**

APO-DICLO and APO-DICLO SR, as NSAIDs, do NOT treat clinical disease or prevent its progression.

APO-DICLO and APO-DICLO SR, as NSAIDs, only relieve symptoms and decrease inflammation for as long as the patient continues to take them.

## **Patients Subsets**

### ***Geriatrics***

Evidence from clinical studies and post-market experience suggests that use in the geriatric population is associated with differences in safety (see **WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS**).

### ***Pediatrics (<16 years of age)***

Safety and efficacy have not been established in the pediatric population.

## **CONTRAINDICATIONS**

APO-DICLO and APO-DICLO SR are contraindicated in:

- the peri-operative setting of coronary artery bypass graft surgery (CABG). Although APO-DICLO and APO-DICLO SR have NOT been studied in this patient population, a selective COX-2 inhibitor NSAID studied in such a setting has led to an increased incidence of cardiovascular/thromboembolic events, deep surgical infections and sternal wound complications.
- the third trimester of pregnancy, because of risk of premature closure of the ductus arteriosus, fetal renal impairment with subsequent oligohydramnios and prolonged parturition.
- women who are breastfeeding, because of the potential for serious adverse reactions in nursing infants.
- severe uncontrolled heart failure.
- known hypersensitivity to APO-DICLO or APO-DICLO SR or to any of the components/excipients.
- history of asthma, urticaria, or allergic-type reactions after taking ASA or other NSAIDs (i.e. complete or partial syndrome of ASA-intolerance - rhinosinusitis, urticaria/angioedema, nasal polyps, asthma). Fatal anaphylactoid reactions have occurred in such individuals. Individuals with the above medical problems are at risk of a severe reaction even if they have taken NSAIDs in the past without any adverse reaction. The potential for cross-reactivity between different NSAIDs must be kept in mind (see **WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS – Hypersensitivity Reactions - *Anaphylactoid Reactions***).
- active gastric / duodenal / peptic ulcer, active GI bleeding or perforation, regional ulcer, gastritis or ulcerative colitis (see WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS and ADVERSE DRUG REACTIONS).

- cerebrovascular bleeding or other bleeding disorders.
- inflammatory bowel disease.
- severe hepatic impairment or active liver disease.
- severe renal impairment (creatinine clearance <30 mL/min or 0.5 mL/sec) or deteriorating renal disease (individuals with lesser degrees of renal impairment are at risk of deterioration of their renal function when prescribed NSAIDs and must be monitored) (see **WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS - Renal**).
- known hyperkalemia (see **WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS - Renal - Fluid and Electrolyte Balance**).
- children and adolescents less than 16 years of age.

## **WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS**

**Risk of Cardiovascular (CV) Adverse Events: Cardiovascular Disease (including ischemic heart disease, Cerebrovascular Disease, Congestive Heart Failure (NYHA II-IV)) (See WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS - Cardiovascular).**

Diclofenac is associated with an increased risk of cardiovascular adverse events (such as myocardial infarction, stroke or thrombotic events, which can be fatal) that is comparable to COX-2 inhibitors. Meta-analyses of randomized clinical trials comparing several different NSAIDs suggest that diclofenac, particularly at higher doses, is associated with an increased risk of cardiovascular adverse events that is comparable to COX-2 inhibitors. Large population-based observational studies conducted in the general population also support these findings. The risk may increase with the dose and duration of use. Patients with cardiovascular disease or risk factors for cardiovascular disease may be at greater risk.

For patients with a high risk of developing an adverse CV event, other management strategies that do NOT include NSAIDs, particularly COX-2 inhibitors and diclofenac, should be considered first. To minimize the potential risk for an adverse CV event, the lowest effective dose should be used for the shortest possible duration. Treatment with diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets or slow release tablets) is not recommended in patients with pre-existing cardiovascular disease (congestive heart failure NYHA II-IV, ischemic heart disease, peripheral arterial disease) cerebrovascular disease, uncontrolled hypertension or patients with risk factors for cardiovascular disease (e.g. hypertension, hyperlipidemia, diabetes mellitus and smoking). These patients should be treated with APO-DICLO or APO-DICLO SR only after careful consideration.

Use of NSAIDs, such as diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets and slow release tablets), can promote sodium retention in a dose-dependent manner, through a renal mechanism, which can result in increased blood pressure and/or exacerbation of congestive heart failure (see also **WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS - Renal - Fluid and Electrolyte Balance**).

**Risk of Gastrointestinal (GI) Adverse Events (See WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS – Gastrointestinal (GI)).**

Use of NSAIDs, such as diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets and slow release tablets), is associated with an increased incidence of gastrointestinal adverse events

(such as peptic/duodenal ulceration, perforation, obstruction and gastrointestinal bleeding).

### **General**

Frail or debilitated patients may tolerate side effects less well and therefore special care should be taken in treating this population. **To minimize the potential risk for an adverse event, the lowest effective dose should be used for the shortest possible duration.** As with other NSAIDs, caution should be used in the treatment of elderly patients who are more likely to be suffering from impaired renal, hepatic or cardiac function. For high risk patients, alternate therapies that do not involve NSAIDs should be considered.

Diclofenac sodium is NOT recommended for use with other NSAIDs, with the exception of low-dose ASA for cardiovascular prophylaxis, because of the absence of any evidence demonstrating synergistic benefits and the potential for additive adverse reactions. (See **DRUG INTERACTIONS – Drug/Drug Interactions - *Acetylsalicylic acid (ASA) or other NSAIDs***).

**Diclofenac sodium should not be used concomitantly with diclofenac potassium (such as Apo-Diclo Rapide) since both exist in plasma as the same active organic ion.**

### **Carcinogenesis and Mutagenesis**

(See TOXICOLOGY)

### **Cardiovascular**

**APO-DICLO and APO-DICLO SR are NSAIDs.**

**Diclofenac is associated with an increased risk of cardiovascular adverse events (such as myocardial infarction, stroke or thrombotic events, which can be fatal) that is comparable to COX-2 inhibitors. Patients with cardiovascular disease or risk factors for cardiovascular disease may be at greater risk.**

As the cardiovascular risks of diclofenac may increase with dose and duration of exposure, the lowest effective daily dose should be used for the shortest duration possible. The patient's need for symptomatic relief and response to therapy should be re-evaluated periodically.

Patients should remain alert for the signs and symptoms of serious arteriothrombotic events (e.g. chest pain, shortness of breath, weakness, slurring of speech), which can occur without warnings.

Patients should be instructed to see a physician immediately in case of such an event.

Use of NSAIDs, such as diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets and slow release tablets), can lead to new hypertension or can worsen pre-existing hypertension, either of which may increase the risk of cardiovascular events as described below. Thus blood pressure should be monitored regularly. Consideration should be given to discontinuing diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets and slow release tablets) should hypertension either develop or worsen with its use.

Use of NSAIDs, such as diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets and slow release tablets), can induce fluid retention and edema, and may exacerbate congestive heart failure, through a

renally-mediated mechanism. (See **WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS - Renal - *Fluid and Electrolyte Balance***).

Caution should be exercised in prescribing APO-DICLO and APO-DICLO SR to patients with risk factors for cardiovascular disease, cerebrovascular disease or renal disease, such as any of the following (NOT an exhaustive list):

- Hypertension
- Dyslipidemia / Hyperlipidemia
- Diabetes Mellitus
- Congestive Heart Failure (NYHA II-IV)
- Ischemic heart disease
- Peripheral Arterial Disease
- Smoking
- Creatinine Clearance < 60 mL/min or 1 mL/sec
- Acute myocardial infarction, history of myocardial infarction and/or angina
- Stroke, cerebrovascular accident, transient ischemic attacks, and/or amaurosis fugax

If needed, these patients should be treated only after careful consideration (See WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS box).

### **Endocrine and Metabolism**

**Corticosteroids:** Diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets and slow release tablets) are NOT a substitute for corticosteroids. They do NOT treat corticosteroid insufficiency. Abrupt discontinuation of corticosteroids may lead to exacerbation of corticosteroid-responsive illness. Patients on prolonged corticosteroid therapy should have their therapy tapered slowly if a decision is made to discontinue corticosteroids (see **DRUG INTERACTIONS - Drug-Drug Interactions - Glucocorticoids**).

### **Gastrointestinal (GI)**

Serious GI toxicity (sometimes fatal), such as peptic/duodenal ulceration, inflammation, perforation, peritonitis, obstruction, gastrointestinal bleeding, gastrointestinal stenosis and ischemic colitis can occur at any time, with or without warning symptoms, in patients treated with NSAIDs, such as diclofenac sodium (enteric coated or slow release tablets). Minor upper GI problems, such as dyspepsia, commonly occur at any time. Health care providers should remain alert for ulceration and bleeding in patients treated with diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets or slow release tablets), even in the absence of previous GI tract symptoms. Most spontaneous reports of fatal GI events are in elderly or debilitated patients and therefore special care should be taken in treating this population. **To minimize the potential risk for an adverse GI event, the lowest effective dose should be used for the shortest possible duration.** For high risk patients, alternate therapies that do not involve NSAIDs should be considered (see **WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS — Special Populations — Geriatrics**).

Patients should be informed about the signs and/or symptoms of serious GI toxicity and instructed to discontinue using diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets or slow release tablets) and seek emergency medical attention if they experience any such symptoms. The utility of periodic laboratory monitoring has NOT been demonstrated, nor has it been adequately assessed. Most patients who develop a serious upper GI adverse event on NSAID therapy have

no symptoms. Upper GI ulcers, gross bleeding or perforation, caused by NSAIDs, appear to occur in approximately 1% of patients treated for 3 to 6 months, and in about 2 to 4% of patients treated for one year. These trends continue, thus increasing the likelihood of developing a serious GI event at some time during the course of therapy. Even a short-term therapy has its risks.

Diclofenac may be associated with increased risk of gastrointestinal anastomotic leak, serious outcomes of which have included multiple surgeries and death. Close medical surveillance and caution are recommended when using diclofenac sodium after gastrointestinal surgery.

Caution should be taken if prescribing diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets or slow release tablets) to patients with a prior history of peptic / duodenal ulcer disease or gastrointestinal bleeding as these individuals have a greater than 10-fold higher risk for developing a GI bleed when taking a NSAID than patients with neither of these risk factors. Other risk factors for GI ulceration and bleeding include the following: *Helicobacter pylori* infection, increased age, prolonged use of NSAID therapy, excess alcohol intake, smoking, poor general health status or concomitant therapy with any of the following:

- Anti-coagulants (e.g. warfarin)
- Anti-platelet agents (e.g. ASA, clopidogrel)
- Oral corticosteroids (e.g. prednisone)
- Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs) (e.g. citalopram, fluoxetine, paroxetine, sertraline)

There is no definitive evidence that the concomitant administration of histamine H<sub>2</sub>-receptor antagonists and/or antacids will either prevent or reduce the occurrence of gastrointestinal adverse events associated with the use of diclofenac sodium slow release tablet or the enteric-coated formulation of diclofenac sodium. Concurrent administration of histamine H<sub>2</sub>-receptor antagonists and/or antacids with the enteric-coated version of diclofenac sodium might result in altered absorption.

### **Genitourinary**

Some NSAIDs are associated with persistent urinary symptoms (bladder pain, dysuria, urinary frequency), hematuria or cystitis. The onset of these symptoms may occur at any time after the initiation of therapy with an NSAID. Should urinary symptoms occur, in the absence of an alternate explanation, treatment with diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets or slow release tablets) should be stopped to ascertain if symptoms disappear. This should be done before urological investigations or treatments are carried out.

### **Hematologic**

NSAIDs inhibiting prostaglandin biosynthesis interfere with platelet function to varying degrees; patients who may be adversely affected by such an action, such as those on anti-coagulants or suffering from hemophilia or platelet disorders should be carefully observed when diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets or slow release tablets) is administered.

**Anti-coagulants:** Numerous studies have shown that the concomitant use of NSAIDs and anti-coagulants increases the risk of bleeding. Concurrent therapy of diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets or slow release tablets) with warfarin requires close monitoring of the

international normalized ratio (INR).

Even with therapeutic INR monitoring, increased bleeding may occur.

**Anti-platelet Effects:** NSAIDs inhibit platelet aggregation and have been shown to prolong bleeding time in some patients. Unlike acetylsalicylic acid (ASA), their effect on platelet function is quantitatively less, or of shorter duration, and is reversible.

Diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets and slow release tablets) and other NSAIDs have no proven efficacy as anti-platelet agents and should NOT be used as a substitute for ASA or other anti-platelet agents for prophylaxis of cardiovascular thromboembolic diseases. Anti-platelet therapies (e.g. ASA) should NOT be discontinued. There is some evidence that use of NSAIDs with ASA can markedly attenuate the cardioprotective effects of ASA (see **DRUG INTERACTIONS - Drug-Drug Interactions - Acetylsalicylic Acid (ASA) or other NSAIDs**).

Concomitant administration of diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets or slow release tablets) with low dose ASA increases the risk of GI ulceration and associated complications.

**Blood dyscrasias:** Blood dyscrasias (such as neutropenia, leukopenia, thrombocytopenia, aplastic anemia and agranulocytosis) associated with the use of NSAIDs are rare, but could occur with severe consequences.

Anemia is sometimes seen in patients receiving NSAIDs, including diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets and slow release tablets). This may be due to fluid retention, GI blood loss, or an incompletely described effect upon erythropoiesis. Patients on long-term treatment with NSAIDs, including diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets and slow release tablets), should have their hemoglobin or hematocrit checked if they exhibit any signs or symptoms of anemia or blood loss.

### **Hepatic/Biliary/Pancreatic**

As with other NSAIDs, including diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets and slow release tablets), borderline elevations of one or more liver enzyme tests (AST, ALT, alkaline phosphatase) may occur in up to 15% of patients. These abnormalities may progress, may remain essentially unchanged, or may be transient with continued therapy.

In post-marketing reports, cases of drug-induced hepatotoxicity have been reported in the first month, and in some cases, the first 2 months of therapy, but can occur at any time during treatment with diclofenac. Post-marketing surveillance has reported cases of severe hepatic reactions, including liver necrosis, jaundice, fulminant hepatitis with and without jaundice, and liver failure. Some of these reported cases resulted in fatalities or liver transplantation.

Physicians should regularly monitor hepatic function in patients receiving APO-DICLO or APO-DICLO SR. If abnormal liver function tests persist or worsen, if clinical signs and symptoms consistent with liver disease develop (e.g. nausea, fatigue, lethargy, diarrhea, pruritus, jaundice, right upper quadrant tenderness, and «flu-like» symptoms), or if other manifestations occur (e.g. eosinophilia, associated with rash etc.), this drug should be discontinued. Hepatotoxic effects may occur with use of diclofenac without prodromal symptoms.

To minimize the possibility that hepatic injury will become severe between transaminase measurements, physicians should inform patients of the warning signs and symptoms of hepatotoxicity and the appropriate action patients should take if these signs and symptoms appear.

APO-DICLO and APO-DICLO SR are contraindicated in severe liver impairment or active liver disease. If there is a need to prescribe this drug to other patients with liver impairment, it must be done under strict observation.

Caution is advised when using diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets or slow release tablets) in patients with hepatic porphyria, since diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets or slow release tablets) may trigger an attack.

### **Hypersensitivity Reactions**

***Anaphylactoid reactions:*** As with NSAIDs in general, anaphylactoid reactions have occurred in patients without known prior exposure to diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets or slow release tablets). In post-marketing experience, rare cases of anaphylactic/ anaphylactoid reactions and angioedema have been reported in patients receiving diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets or slow release tablets). Diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets or slow release tablets) should NOT be given to patients with the ASA-triad. This symptom complex typically occurs in asthmatic patients who experience rhinitis with or without nasal polyps, or who exhibit severe, potentially fatal bronchospasm after taking ASA or other NSAIDs (see **CONTRAINDICATIONS**).

***ASA-intolerance:*** Diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets or slow release tablets) should NOT be given to patients with complete or partial syndrome of ASA-intolerance (rhinosinusitis, urticaria/angioedema, nasal polyps, asthma) in whom asthma, anaphylaxis, urticaria/angioedema, rhinitis or other allergic manifestations are precipitated by ASA or other NSAIDs. Fatal anaphylactoid reactions have occurred in such individuals. As well, individuals with the above medical problems are at risk of a severe reaction even if they have taken NSAIDs in the past without any adverse reaction (see **CONTRAINDICATIONS**).

***Cross-sensitivity:*** Patients sensitive to any one of the NSAIDs may be sensitive to any of the other NSAIDs as well.

### ***Serious Skin Reactions:***

(See **WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS - Skin**)

### **Immune**

(See **WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS - Infection - *Aseptic Meningitis***)

### **Infection**

Diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets and slow release tablets), in common with other NSAIDs, may mask signs and symptoms of an underlying infectious disease.

***Aseptic Meningitis:*** Rarely, with some NSAIDs, the symptoms of aseptic meningitis (stiff neck, severe headaches, nausea and vomiting, fever or clouding of consciousness) have been

observed. Patients with autoimmune disorders (systemic lupus erythematosus, mixed connective tissue diseases, etc.) seem to be pre-disposed. Therefore, in such patients, the health care provider must be vigilant to the development of this complication.

### **Neurologic**

Some patients may experience drowsiness, dizziness, blurred vision, vertigo, insomnia, depression, tinnitus or hearing loss with the use of NSAIDs, such as diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets and slow release tablets). If patients experience such adverse reaction(s) they should exercise caution in carrying out activities that require alertness.

### **Ophthalmologic**

Blurred and/or diminished vision has been reported with the use of NSAIDs, which may be reversible with discontinuation. If such symptoms develop, diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets or slow release tablets) should be discontinued and an ophthalmologic examination performed. Ophthalmologic examination should be carried out at periodic intervals in any patient receiving diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets or slow release tablets) for an extended period of time.

Sun exposure in patients using diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets or slow release tablets) might cause photosensitivity and vision changes. Patients should be advised to contact their physician for assessment and advice if this occurs.

### **Peri-Operative Considerations**

(See **CONTRAINDICATIONS** - Coronary Artery Bypass Graft Surgery)

### **Psychiatric**

(See **WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS** - **Neurologic**)

### **Renal**

Long term administration of NSAIDs to animals has resulted in renal papillary necrosis and other abnormal renal pathology. In humans, there have been reports of acute interstitial nephritis, hematuria, low grade proteinuria and occasionally nephrotic syndrome.

During long-term therapy, kidney function should be monitored periodically (see **ACTION AND CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY-Special Populations and Conditions-Renal Impairment**).

Renal insufficiency due to NSAID use is seen in patients with pre-renal conditions leading to reduction in renal blood flow or blood volume. Under these circumstances, renal prostaglandins help maintain renal perfusion and glomerular filtration rate (GFR). In these patients, administration of a NSAID may cause a reduction in prostaglandin synthesis leading to impaired renal function. Patients at greatest risk of this reaction are those with pre-existing renal insufficiency (GFR < 60 mL/min or 1 mL/s), dehydrated patients, patients on salt restricted diets, those with congestive heart failure, cirrhosis, liver dysfunction, taking angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitors, angiotensin-II receptor blockers, cyclosporine, diuretics, and those who are elderly. Serious or life-threatening renal failure has been reported in patients with normal or

impaired renal function after short term therapy with NSAIDs. Even patients at risk who demonstrate the ability to tolerate a NSAID under stable conditions may decompensate during periods of added stress (e.g. dehydration due to gastroenteritis). Discontinuation of NSAIDs is usually followed by recovery to the pre-treatment state.

Caution should be used when initiating treatment with NSAIDs, such as diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets or slow release tablets), in patients with considerable dehydration. Such patients should be rehydrated prior to initiation of therapy. Caution is also recommended in patients with pre-existing kidney disease.

(See **WARNING AND PRECAUTIONS - Monitoring and Laboratory Tests - Renal**)

**Advanced Renal Disease:** (See **CONTRAINDICATIONS**)

**Fluid and Electrolyte Balance:** Use of NSAIDs, such as diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets or slow release tablets), can promote sodium retention in a dose-dependent manner, which can lead to fluid retention and edema, and consequences of increased blood pressure and exacerbation of congestive heart failure. Thus, caution should be exercised in prescribing diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets or slow release tablets) in patients with a history of congestive heart failure, compromised cardiac function, hypertension, increased age or other conditions predisposing to fluid retention (see **WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS - Cardiovascular**).

Use of NSAIDs, such as diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets or slow release tablets), can increase the risk of hyperkalemia, especially in patients with diabetes mellitus, renal failure, increased age, or those receiving concomitant therapy with adrenergic blockers, angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitors, angiotensin-II receptor antagonists, cyclosporine, tacrolimus, trimethoprim or some diuretics. Electrolytes should be monitored periodically (see **CONTRAINDICATIONS** and **DRUG INTERACTIONS – Drug-Drug Interactions**).

### **Respiratory**

ASA-induced asthma is an uncommon but very important indication of ASA and NSAIDs sensitivity. It occurs more frequently in patients with asthma who have nasal polyps.

**Pre-existing asthma:** In patients with asthma, seasonal allergic rhinitis, swelling of the nasal mucosa (i.e. nasal polyps), chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases or chronic infections of the respiratory tract (especially if linked to allergic rhinitis-like symptoms), reactions on NSAIDs like asthma exacerbations (so-called intolerance to analgesics / analgesics-asthma), Quincke's oedema or urticaria are more frequent than in other patients. Therefore, special precaution is recommended in such patients (readiness for emergency). This is applicable as well for patients who are allergic to other substances, e.g. with skin reactions, pruritus or urticaria.

### **Sexual Function / Reproduction**

The use of diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets or slow release tablets), as with any drug known to inhibit cyclooxygenase/prostaglandin synthesis, may impair fertility and is not recommended in women attempting to conceive. Therefore, in women who have difficulties conceiving, or who are undergoing investigation of infertility, withdrawal of diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets or slow release tablets) should be considered.

## **Skin**

In rare cases, serious skin reactions such as Stevens-Johnson syndrome, toxic epidermal necrolysis, exfoliative dermatitis and erythema multiforme have been associated with the use of some NSAIDs. Because the rate of these reactions is low, they have usually been noted during post-marketing surveillance in patients taking other medications also associated with the potential development of these serious skin reactions. Thus, causality is NOT clear. These reactions are potentially life threatening but may be reversible if the causative agent is discontinued and appropriate treatment instituted. Patients should be advised that if they experience a skin rash they should discontinue their NSAID and contact their physician for assessment and advice, including which additional therapies to discontinue.

Use of diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets or slow release tablets) may cause photosensitivity upon exposure to sunlight or UV light causing symptoms such as sunburn, skin rash, skin blisters, pruritus, erythema and discolouration.

## **Special Populations**

***Pregnant Women:*** Diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets or slow release tablets) are **CONTRAINDICATED** for use during the third trimester of pregnancy because of risk of premature closure of the ductus arteriosus, fetal renal impairment with subsequent oligohydramnios and the potential to prolong parturition (see TOXICOLOGY).

**APO-DICLO SR should not be used during the first two trimesters of pregnancy unless the expected benefits to the mother outweigh the risks to the fetus.**

Inhibition of prostaglandin synthesis may adversely affect pregnancy and/or the embryofetal development. Data from epidemiological studies suggest an increased risk of miscarriage and of cardiac malformation after use of a prostaglandin synthesis inhibitor (such as NSAIDs) in early pregnancy.

In animals, administration of a prostaglandin synthesis inhibitor has been shown to result in increased pre- and post-implantation loss and embryo-foetal lethality. In addition, increased incidences of various malformations, including cardiovascular, have been reported in animals given a prostaglandin synthesis inhibitor during the organogenetic period. Diclofenac sodium readily crosses the placental barrier.

***Nursing Women:*** (see **CONTRAINDICATIONS**)

***Pediatrics:*** (see **CONTRAINDICATIONS**)

***Geriatrics:*** Patients older than 65 years (referred to in this document as older or elderly) and frail or debilitated patients are more susceptible to a variety of adverse reactions from NSAIDs; the incidence of these adverse reactions increases with dose and duration of treatment. In addition, these patients are less tolerant to ulceration and bleeding. Most reports of fatal GI events are in this population. Older patients are also at risk of lower esophageal injury including ulceration and bleeding.

For such patients, consideration should be given to a starting dose lower than the one usually recommended, with individual adjustment when necessary and under close supervision, especially in frail elderly patients or those with a low body weight

## **Monitoring and Laboratory Tests**

**Cardiovascular (Hypertension):** Blood pressure should be monitored regularly during therapy with diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets or slow release tablets).

**Hematologic:** Patients on long-term treatment with diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets or slow release tablets) should have their hemoglobin, hematocrit, red blood cells (RBC), white blood cells (WBC), and platelets checked if they exhibit any signs or symptoms of anemia or blood loss or blood dyscrasia.

Concurrent therapy of diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets or slow release tablets) with warfarin requires close monitoring of the international normalized ratio (INR).

**Hepatic:** Hepatic function (e.g. serum transaminases, bilirubin) should be monitored regularly during therapy with diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets or slow release tablets).

**Ophthalmologic:** Patients on long-term treatment with diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets or slow release tablets) should have an ophthalmologic examination performed periodically, and if they experience blurred and/or diminished vision.

**Renal:** Patients with pre-existing renal insufficiency (GFR < 60 mL/min or 1 mL/s), dehydrated patients, patients on salt restricted diets, those with congestive heart failure, cirrhosis, liver dysfunction, taking angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitors, angiotensin-II receptor blockers, cyclosporine, diuretics, and the elderly should have their renal function monitored (e.g. urine output, serum creatinine, creatinine clearance and serum urea) during therapy with diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets or slow release tablets).

Electrolytes, including serum potassium, should be monitored periodically, especially in patients with diabetes mellitus, renal failure, increased age, or those receiving concomitant therapy with adrenergic blockers, angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitors, angiotensin-II receptor antagonists, cyclosporine, tacrolimus, trimethoprim or some diuretics.

## **ADVERSE REACTIONS**

### **Adverse Drug Reaction Overview**

Although not all adverse drug reactions have been reported with diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets or slow release tablets), the types of adverse drug reactions are expected to be similar to those of diclofenac potassium since both formulations exist in the plasma as the same active organic anion.

Gastrointestinal, dermatological, CNS and hepatic adverse reactions are the most commonly seen with diclofenac. The most severe gastrointestinal adverse reactions observed were ulceration and bleeding, while the most severe dermatological albeit rare reactions observed with diclofenac were erythema multiforme (Stevens-Johnson Syndrome and Lyell Syndrome). Fatalities have occurred on occasion, particularly in the elderly.

This section summarizes adverse drug reaction data pooled from clinical trials, published

investigations and post-marketing experience with diclofenac potassium and diclofenac sodium.

Frequency estimate:

Very common:  $\geq 10\%$

Common:  $\geq 1\%$  and  $< 10\%$

Uncommon:  $\geq 0.01\%$  and  $< 1\%$

Very rare  $< 0.01\%$ , including isolated reports.

**Table 1: Most Common Adverse Drug Reactions ( $\geq 1\%$ )**

<b><i>Gastrointestinal disorders</i></b>	Very common	nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, dyspepsia, abdominal pain, flatulence, decreased appetite
<b><i>Nervous System disorders</i></b>	Common	dizziness, headache
<b><i>Hepatic</i></b>	Common	elevations ( $\geq 3$ times the upper normal limit) of serum aminotransferase enzymes (SGOT or AST, SGPT or ALT).
<b><i>Skin and subcutaneous disorders</i></b>	Common	rash, pruritus
<b><i>Ear and labyrinth disorders</i></b>	Common	vertigo

**Table 2: Less Common Adverse Drug Reactions ( $< 1\%$ )**

<b><i>Gastrointestinal disorders</i></b>	Uncommon	gastritis, gastrointestinal hemorrhage, hemorrhagic diarrhea, melena, hematemesis gastric and intestinal ulcerations (with or without bleeding or perforation)
	Very rare	lower gut disorders (including hemorrhagic colitis and exacerbation of ulcerative colitis or Crohn's disease), intestinal diaphragm disease, hyperacidity, stomatitis, glossitis, coated tongue, esophageal lesions, constipation, pancreatitis
<b><i>Nervous System Disorders</i></b>	Uncommon	somnolence, malaise, impaired concentration, tiredness
	Very rare	sensory disturbances including paresthesia, memory impairment, convulsions, anxiety, tremor, aseptic meningitis, cerebrovascular accident (including ischemic attack, cerebral hemorrhage), dysgeusia
<b><i>Eye disorders</i></b>	Very rare	visual impairment (blurred vision, diplopia)
<b><i>Ear and labyrinth disorders</i></b>	Very rare	hearing impaired, tinnitus
<b><i>Cardiac disorders</i></b>	Uncommon	myocardial infarction, cardiac failure, palpitations, angina, arrhythmias, chest pain
<b><i>Vascular disorders</i></b>	Very rare	hypertension, vasculitis
<b><i>Skin and subcutaneous Disorders</i></b>	Uncommon	urticaria
	Very rare	bullous dermatitis, erythema, eczema, erythema multiforme, Stevens-Johnson Syndrome, Lyell Syndrome (toxic epidermal necrolysis), erythroderma (exfoliative dermatitis), alopecia, photosensitivity reactions, purpura, Henoch-Schonlein purpura
<b><i>Renal and urinary disorders</i></b>	Uncommon	edema (facial, general, peripheral)
	Very rare	acute kidney injury (acute renal failure), nephrotic syndrome, urinary abnormalities (e.g., hematuria and proteinuria), tubulointerstitial nephritis, renal papillary

		necrosis
<b>Hematologic</b>	Very rare	thrombocytopenia, leukopenia, agranulocytosis, hemolytic anemia, aplastic anemia, anemia secondary to gastrointestinal bleeding
<b>Hepatic</b>	Uncommon	liver function disorders including hepatitis, hepatic necrosis, hepatic failure, jaundice
	Very rare	hepatitis fulminant
<b>Immune system disorders</b>	Uncommon	hypersensitivity anaphylactic / anaphylactoid systemic reactions (including hypotension and shock)
	Very rare	angioedema, (including face edema)
<b>Psychiatric disorders</b>	Very rare	disorientation, depression, insomnia, nightmare, irritability, psychotic disorder
<b>Respiratory disorders</b>	Uncommon	asthma (including dyspnea)
	Very rare	pneumonitis

### **Post-Market Adverse Drug Reactions**

**Hepatic:** Severe hepatic reactions including liver necrosis, fulminant hepatitis with and without jaundice, and liver failure, some of them with fatal outcome or requiring liver transplantation (see WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS – Hepatic/Biliary/Pancreatic).

**Cardiovascular:** Serious reactions including myocardial infarction, cardiac failure, palpitations, angina, arrhythmias, chest pain.

Meta-analysis and pharmacoepidemiological data point towards an increased risk of arteriothrombotic events associated with the use of diclofenac, particularly at a high dose (see WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS box).

**Gastrointestinal Disorders:** gastrointestinal stenosis, perforation which may lead to peritonitis, and ischemic colitis (which are sometimes fatal), anastomotic leak (see **WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS – Gastrointestinal (GI)**).

**Immune/Hypersensitivity:** Kounis syndrome, a serious allergic reaction that can cause myocardial infarction.

## **DRUG INTERACTIONS**

### **Drug-Drug Interactions**

#### **Overview**

**Effect of Other Drugs on the Metabolism of diclofenac:** Co-prescribing diclofenac with CYP2C9 inhibitors could result in a significant increase in peak plasma concentrations and exposure to diclofenac. Although there are no clinical data available on the drug interaction between diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets or slow release tablets) and CYP2C9 inducers, the possibility of decreased efficacy of diclofenac resulting from concomitant administration with a CYP2C9 inducer cannot be excluded. Dosage adjustment may be

required.

**Drugs known to cause hyperkalemia:** Concomitant treatment with potassium-sparing diuretics, cyclosporine, tacrolimus, trimethoprim, ACE inhibitors, angiotensin-II receptor antagonists or adrenergic blockers may be associated with increased serum potassium levels, which should therefore be monitored frequently (see WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS - Renal – Fluid and Electrolyte Balance).

**Table 3: Established Potential Drug-Drug Interactions**

<b>Diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets or slow release tablets)</b>	<b>Clinical comment</b>
<b>Acetaminophen</b>	There may be an increased risk of adverse renal effects when administered concomitantly with NSAIDs.
<b>Acetylsalicylic acid (ASA) or other NSAIDs</b>	<p>The use of diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets or slow release tablets) in addition to any other NSAID, including over the counter ones (such as ASA and ibuprofen) for analgesic and/or anti-inflammatory effects is NOT recommended because of the absence of any evidence demonstrating synergistic benefits and the potential for additive adverse reactions.</p> <p>The exception is the use of low dose ASA for cardiovascular protection when another NSAID is being used for its analgesic/anti-inflammatory effect, keeping in mind that combination NSAID therapy is associated with additive adverse reactions.</p> <p>Some NSAIDs (e.g. ibuprofen) may interfere with the anti-platelet effects of low dose ASA, possibly by competing with ASA for access to the active site of cyclooxygenase-1.</p> <p><b>Diclofenac sodium should not be used concomitantly with diclofenac potassium (such as APO-DICLO RAPIDE) since both exist in plasma as the same active organic ion.</b></p> <p>Concomitant administration of diclofenac and other systemic NSAIDs or corticosteroids may increase the frequency of gastrointestinal undesirable effects.</p>
<b>Alcohol</b>	There may be an increased risk of gastrointestinal side effects, including ulceration or hemorrhage, when administered concomitantly with NSAIDs.
<b>Antacids</b>	Concomitant administration of antacids with NSAIDs may affect the rate, but generally not the extent of the absorption of the NSAID.
<b>Anticoagulants</b>	(See <b>WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS- Hematologic- Anti coagulants</b> )

Diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets or slow release tablets)	Clinical comment
Anti-hypertensives	<p>NSAIDs may diminish the anti-hypertensive effect of Angiotensin Converting Enzyme (ACE) inhibitors.</p> <p>Combinations of ACE inhibitors, angiotensin-II antagonists, or diuretics with NSAIDs might have an increased risk for acute renal failure and hyperkalemia. Blood pressure and renal function (including electrolytes) should be monitored more closely in this situation, as occasionally there can be a substantial increase in blood pressure (see <b>WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS -Renal</b>).</p> <p>Therefore the combination should be administered with caution, especially in the elderly (see <b>WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS -Monitoring and Laboratory Tests</b>).</p>
Anti-platelet agents (including ASA)	<p>There is an increased risk of bleeding, via inhibition of platelet function, when anti-platelet agents are combined with NSAIDs, such as diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets and slow release tablets) (see <b>WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS - Hematologic - Anti-platelet Effects</b>).</p>
Cyclosporine	<p>Nephrotoxicity of cyclosporine may be increased because of the effect of NSAIDs on renal prostaglandins. Therefore, it should be given at doses lower than those that would be used in patients not receiving cyclosporine.</p>
CYP2C9 inducers	<p>Caution is recommended when co-prescribing diclofenac with CYP2C9 inducers (such as rifampin), which could result in a significant decrease in plasma concentration and exposure to diclofenac. Dosage adjustment may be required.</p>
CYP2C9 inhibitors	<p>Caution is recommended when co-prescribing diclofenac with CYP2C9 inhibitors (such as voriconazole or sulfonpyrazone), which could result in a significant increase in peak plasma concentrations and exposure to diclofenac. Dosage adjustment may be required.</p>
Digoxin	<p>Diclofenac may increase the plasma concentration of digoxin. Dosage adjustment may be required. Monitoring of serum digoxin level is recommended.</p>
Diuretics	<p>Clinical studies as well as post-marketing observations have shown that NSAIDs can reduce the effect of diuretics (see <b>WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS -Renal</b>).</p> <p><i>Class Statement</i></p> <p>Concomitant treatment with potassium-sparing diuretics may be associated with increased serum potassium, thus making it necessary to monitor levels (see <b>WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS Monitoring and Laboratory Tests -Renal</b>).</p>
Glucocorticoids	<p>Some studies have shown that concomitant use of NSAIDs and oral glucocorticoids increases the risk of GI adverse events such</p>

<b>Diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets or slow release tablets)</b>	<b>Clinical comment</b>
	as ulceration and bleeding. This is especially the case in older (>65 years of age) individuals.
<b>Lithium</b>	Monitoring of plasma lithium concentrations is advised when stopping or starting a NSAID, as increased lithium concentrations can occur in patients taking lithium. Dosage adjustment of lithium may be required.
<b>Methotrexate</b>	Caution should be exercised when NSAIDs, including diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets and slow release tablets), are administered less than 24 hours before or after treatment with methotrexate. Elevated blood concentrations of methotrexate may occur, increasing toxicity.
<b>Oral Contraceptives</b>	No drug interaction data are available for diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets and slow release tablets) co-administered with oral contraceptives.
<b>Oral Hypoglycemics</b>	<p>Pharmacodynamic studies have shown no potentiation of effect with concurrent administration with diclofenac; however, there are isolated reports of both hypoglycemic and hyperglycemic effects in the presence of diclofenac, which necessitated changes in the dosage of hypoglycemic agents. For this reason, monitoring of the blood glucose level is recommended as a precautionary measure during concomitant therapy.</p> <p>There have also been reports of metabolic acidosis when diclofenac was co-administered with metformin, particularly in the context of renal impairment. Caution is recommended when co-prescribing diclofenac with metformin.</p>
<b>Phenytoin</b>	When using phenytoin concomitantly with diclofenac, monitoring of phenytoin plasma concentrations is recommended due to an expected increase in exposure to phenytoin.
<b>Probenecid</b>	May decrease the excretion and increase serum concentrations of NSAIDs possibly enhancing effectiveness and/or increasing potential for toxicity. Concurrent therapy of NSAIDs with probenecid requires close monitoring to be certain that no change in dosage is necessary.
<b>Quinolone antibacterials</b>	There have been isolated reports of convulsions which may have been due to concomitant use of quinolones and NSAIDs.
<b>Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs)</b>	Concomitant administration of NSAIDs, including diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets and slow release tablets), and SSRIs may increase the risk of gastrointestinal ulceration and bleeding (see <b>WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS – Gastrointestinal (GI)</b> ).
<b>Sulfinpyrazone</b>	Caution is recommended when co-prescribing diclofenac with CYP2C9 inhibitors (such as sulfinpyrazone, which could result in a significant increase in peak plasma concentrations and exposure to diclofenac. Dosage adjustment may be required.

Diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets or slow release tablets)	Clinical comment
Tacrolimus	Nephrotoxicity of tacrolimus may be increased because of the effect of NSAIDs on renal prostaglandins. Therefore, it should be given at doses lower than those that would be used in patients not receiving tacrolimus.
Voriconazole	Caution is recommended when co-prescribing diclofenac with CYP2C9 inhibitors (such as voriconazole), which could result in a significant increase in peak plasma concentrations and exposure to diclofenac. Dosage adjustment may be required.

### **Drug-Food Interactions**

Interactions with food have not been established.

### **Drug-Herb Interactions**

Interactions with herbal products have not been established.

### **Drug Laboratory Tests Interactions:**

Diclofenac increases platelet aggregation time but does not affect bleeding time, plasma thrombin clotting time, plasma fibrinogen, or factors V and VII to XII. Statistically significant changes in prothrombin and partial thromboplastin times have been reported in normal volunteers. The mean changes were observed to be less than 1 second in both instances, and are unlikely to be clinically important.

Persistently abnormal or worsening renal, hepatic or hematological test values should be followed up carefully since they may be related to therapy.

### **Drug-Lifestyle Interactions**

Patients experiencing visual disturbances, dizziness, vertigo, somnolence or other central nervous system disturbances while taking diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets or slow release tablets) should refrain from driving or using machines.

## **DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION**

### **Dosing Considerations**

**Geriatrics:** For such patients, consideration should be given to a starting dose lower than the one usually recommended, with individual adjustment when necessary and under close supervision. Caution is indicated especially for frail elderly patients or those with a low body weight (See **WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS - Special Populations - Geriatrics**).

**Cardiovascular disease or cardiovascular risk factors:** Treatment with APO-DICLO (diclofenac sodium) or APO-DICLO SR is not recommended in patients with pre-existing cardiovascular disease (congestive heart failure NYHA II-IV, ischemic heart disease, peripheral

arterial disease), cerebrovascular disease, uncontrolled hypertension, or patients with risk factors for cardiovascular disease (e.g. hypertension, hyperlipidemia, diabetes mellitus and smoking). These patients should be treated with APO-DICLO (diclofenac sodium) or APO-DICLO SR only after careful consideration (see **WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS – box**).

***Renal Impairment:***

APO-DICLO or APO-DICLO SR is contraindicated in patients with severe renal impairment or deteriorating renal disease (see CONTRAINDICATIONS). Lower doses of APO-DICLO or APO-DICLO SR should be considered in patients with impaired renal function (see **WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS – Renal**).

***Hepatic Impairment:***

APO-DICLO or APO-DICLO SR is contraindicated in patients with severe hepatic impairment or active liver disease (see CONTRAINDICATIONS). Lower doses of APO-DICLO or APO-DICLO SR should be considered in patients with impaired hepatic function (see **WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS – Hepatic/Biliary/Pancreatic**).

**Recommended Dose and Dose Adjustment**

APO-DICLO and APO-DICLO SR are to be used for maintenance therapy only.

As a general recommendation, the dose should be individually adjusted. Adverse effects may be minimized by using the lowest effective dose for the shortest duration necessary to control symptoms.

**APO-DICLO Tablets 25 mg and 50 mg (enteric-coated)**

Rheumatoid arthritis and osteoarthritis patients may use APO-DICLO (diclofenac sodium) enteric-coated tablets if:

- They were previously initiated at the lowest dose of 75 mg (enteric-coated) per day in 3 divided doses and required up-titration because they did not respond to that dose.
- The maximum recommended daily dose is 100 mg.

APO-DICLO should be taken with food and the tablets should be swallowed whole.

**APO-DICLO SR 75 mg and 100 mg (slow-release tablets)**

- Patients with rheumatoid arthritis or osteoarthritis on a maintenance dose of 75 mg diclofenac sodium per day may be changed to a once daily dose of APO-DICLO SR 75 mg administered morning or evening.
- Patients on a maintenance dose of 100 mg diclofenac sodium per day may be changed to a once daily dose of APO-DICLO SR 100 mg, administered morning or evening.
- The maximum recommended daily dose is 100 mg.

APO-DICLO SR tablets should be swallowed whole with liquid, preferably at mealtime.

### **Missed Dose**

Patients who miss one or more doses of APO-DICLO (diclofenac sodium) 25 and 50 mg tablets or APO-DICLO SR 75 and 100 mg tablets should not increase the dose of APO-DICLO (diclofenac sodium) or APO-DICLO SR to compensate for the missed dose or doses, but should continue with their therapy as soon as possible.

### **OVERDOSAGE**

For management of a suspected drug overdose, contact your regional Poison Control Center.
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### **Symptoms**

There is no typical clinical picture resulting from diclofenac overdose. Overdosage can cause symptoms such as vomiting, gastrointestinal haemorrhage, diarrhoea, dizziness, tinnitus or convulsions. In the event of significant poisoning, acute renal failure and liver damage are possible.

### **Therapeutic measures**

Management of acute poisoning with NSAIDs, including diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets and slow release tablets), essentially consists of supportive measures and symptomatic treatment. Supportive measures and symptomatic treatment should be given for complications such as hypotension, renal failure, convulsions, gastrointestinal disorder, and respiratory depression. Special measures such as forced diuresis, dialysis or haemoperfusion are probably of no help in eliminating NSAIDs, including diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets and slow release tablets), due to the high protein binding and extensive metabolism. Activated charcoal may be considered after ingestion of a potentially toxic overdose, and gastric decontamination (e.g. vomiting, gastric lavage) after ingestion of a potentially life threatening overdose.

### **ACTION AND CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY**

#### **Mechanism of Action**

Diclofenac sodium is a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID). The mode of action is not fully known but it does not act through the pituitary-adrenal axis. Diclofenac sodium inhibits prostaglandin synthesis by interfering with the action of prostaglandin synthetase. This inhibitory effect may partially explain its actions.

#### **Pharmacodynamics**

The effects of diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets or slow release tablets) are largely mediated by inhibition of cyclooxygenases (COXs, COX-1, COX-2). These enzymes are found throughout the body and produce prostaglandins, which are important mediators of pain, fever, and adaptive and protective reactions in many organs and (inflamed) tissues.

#### **Pharmacokinetics**

**Absorption:** In humans, orally-administered diclofenac sodium is rapidly and almost completely absorbed and distributed to blood, liver, and kidneys. The plasma concentrations show a linear relationship to the amount of drug administered. No accumulation occurs provided the recommended dosage intervals are observed.

Enteric coating may delay the onset of absorption from 50 mg tablets. Absorption occurs more rapidly when the drug is administered on an empty stomach ( $T_{max}$  2.5 hours), than with meals ( $T_{max}$  6 hours). The bioavailability remains the same under both conditions. The mean peak plasma concentration of 1.5 mcg/mL (5 mcmol/L) is attained, on average, 2 hours after ingestion of one 50 mg enteric-coated tablet.

Following administration of slow-release (SR) diclofenac sodium,  $C_{max}$  is reached at approximately 4 hours or later. Significant drug plasma concentrations persist when levels would have dropped almost to baseline values following enteric-coated tablet administration. Mean plasma concentrations of 13 ng/mL (40 nmol/L) were produced 24 hours after diclofenac sodium slow-release (SR) 100 mg tablets, or 16 hours after diclofenac sodium slow-release (SR) 75 mg tablets (single dose). Trough levels are approximately 22 to 25 ng/mL (70 to 80 nmol/L) during treatment with diclofenac sodium slow-release (SR) 100 mg tablets once daily or diclofenac sodium slow-release (SR) 75 mg tablets twice daily. In pharmacokinetic studies no accumulation of diclofenac sodium was found following repeated once daily administration of diclofenac sodium slow-release (SR) 100 mg tablets or repeated twice daily administration of diclofenac sodium slow-release (SR) 75 mg tablets.

**Distribution:** Diclofenac sodium is extensively bound (99%) to serum albumin. The apparent volume of distribution is 0.12 to 0.17 L/kg. Single-dose (P.O. or I.M) studies in rheumatoid patients with joint effusions have shown that diclofenac is distributed to the synovial fluid, where  $T_{max}$  occurs 2 to 4 hours after plasma  $T_{max}$ . Synovial fluid concentrations exceed plasma levels within 4 to 6 hours of administration. This elevation above plasma concentrations can be maintained for up to 12 hours. The synovial fluid elimination half-life is at least 3 times greater than that for plasma.

Diclofenac was detected in a low concentration (100 ng/mL) in breast milk in one nursing mother. The estimated amount ingested by an infant consuming breast milk is equivalent to a 0.03 mg/kg/day dose (see CONTRAINDICATIONS).

**Metabolism:** Diclofenac undergoes single and multiple hydroxylation and methoxylation, producing 3'-, 4'-, 5-hydroxy, 4'- 5-hydroxy and 3'-hydroxy-4'-methoxy derivatives of diclofenac. These phenolic metabolites are largely inactive, and (along with the parent compound) are mostly converted to glucuronide conjugates.

**Excretion:** Plasma clearance of diclofenac is  $263 \pm 56$  mL/min. The mean terminal drug half-life in plasma is 1.8 hours after oral doses. In humans about 60% of the drug and its metabolites are eliminated in the urine and the balance through bile in the feces. More than 90% of an oral dose is accounted for in elimination products within 72 hours. About 1% of an oral dose is excreted unchanged in urine.

## **Special Populations and Conditions**

**Renal Impairment:** In patients suffering from renal impairment, no accumulation of the unchanged active substance can be inferred from the single-dose kinetics when applying the usual dosage schedule. At a creatinine clearance of <10 mL/min, the calculated steady-state plasma levels of the hydroxy metabolites are about 4 times higher than in normal subjects. However, the metabolites are ultimately cleared through the bile. Although no accumulation of pharmacologically active substance seem to occur, caution is advised while administering diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets or slow release tablets) to patients with impaired kidney function (i.e. GFR < 60 mL/min or 1 mL/sec) (see **WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS - Renal**). Diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets and slow release tablets) are contraindicated in patients with severely impaired or deteriorating renal function (creatinine clearance < 30 mL/min (0.5 mL/s) (see **CONTRAINDICATIONS**).

**Hepatic impairment:** In a study of ten patients with impaired hepatic function (chronic hepatitis and non-decompensated cirrhosis) receiving a single oral dose of 100 mg diclofenac sodium, the kinetics and metabolism of diclofenac, were the same as in patients without liver disease.

**Pediatrics:** Diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets and slow release tablets) are contraindicated in children and adolescents less than 16 years of age (see **CONTRAINDICATIONS**).

**Geriatrics:** The ability of elderly subjects to absorb, metabolize and excrete diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets or slow release tablets) does not appear to differ significantly from those of younger subjects.

## **STORAGE AND STABILITY**

Store at room temperature (15°C to 30°C) and protect from high humidity.

## **DOSAGE FORMS, COMPOSITION AND PACKAGING**

**APO-DICLO (diclofenac sodium) Tablets 25 mg:** round, biconvex, yellow, enteric-coated tablets, engraved '25' on one side.

**APO-DICLO (diclofenac sodium) Tablets 50 mg:** round, biconvex, light brown, enteric-coated tablets, engraved '50' on one side.

**APO-DICLO SR (diclofenac sodium) Slow-Release Tablets 75 mg:** triangular, light pink, biconvex with bevelled edge, film-coated tablets, engraved 'APO' over '75' on one side, other side plain.

**APO-DICLO SR (diclofenac sodium) Slow-Release Tablets 100 mg:** round, pink, biconvex with bevelled edge, film-coated tablets, engraved 'APO' over '100' on one side, other side plain.

APO-DICLO is available in bottles of 100, 500 and 1000 tablets.

APO-DICLO SR is available in bottles of 100, 250 (100 mg), 500 and 1000 tablets.

**Composition:**

**Enteric-Coated Tablets:** In addition to diclofenac sodium, each enteric coated tablet contains the non-medicinal ingredients colloidal silicon dioxide, dextrates, FD & C yellow #6, ferric oxide yellow, hydroxypropyl methylcellulose, magnesium stearate, methylcellulose, methanol polyethylene glycol, polyvinylacetate phthalate, stearic acid, titanium dioxide and triethyl citrate. Each 25 mg tablet also contains the non-medicinal ingredient D&C yellow #10.

**Slow-Release Tablets:** In addition to diclofenac sodium, each slow release tablet contains the non-medicinal ingredients dextrates, ferric oxide red, hydroxyethyl cellulose, hydroxypropyl methylcellulose, microcrystalline cellulose, magnesium stearate, polyethylene glycol and titanium dioxide.

## PART II: SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION

### PHARMACEUTICAL INFORMATION

#### Drug Substance

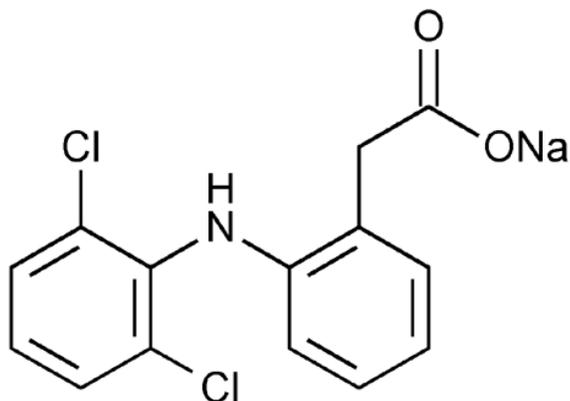
Proper Name: Diclofenac sodium

Chemical Name: Sodium-[o-[(2,6-dichlorophenyl)-amino]-phenyl]-acetate

Molecular formula:  $C_{14}H_{10}Cl_2NNaO_2$

Molecular weight: 318.1 g/mol

Structural Formula:



Physicochemical properties: White to off-white powder with a salty bitter taste. At 25°C, diclofenac sodium is 2% soluble in water (pH 7.7). It is practically insoluble in aqueous acidic solutions

## CLINICAL TRIALS

### Comparative Bioavailability Studies

A bioavailability study was performed using normal human volunteers. The rate and extent of absorption after a single 50 mg oral dose of APO-DICLO (diclofenac sodium) 25 mg and VOLTAREN 25 mg enteric coated tablets was measured and compared. The results are summarized as follows:

**Table 1: Comparative Bioavailability Data for Enteric Coated Tablets**

	<b>VOLTAREN 25mg</b>	<b>APO-DICLO 25mg</b>	<b>% diffr.</b>
AUC <sub>0-12</sub> (ng.hr/mL)	1357.87	1338.55	-1.4
C <sub>max</sub> (ng/mL)	1220.29	1236.58	+1.3
T <sub>max</sub> (hr)	1.16	1.34	+15.5
t <sub>1/2</sub> (hr)	1.1	1.0	-9.1

Two additional bioavailability studies were performed using slow release tablets, one with food (performed on 19 healthy adult male subjects) and one without food (performed on 14 healthy adult male subjects). The rate and extent of absorption of diclofenac after a single 100 mg oral dose of APO-DICLO SR 100 mg and VOLTAREN SR 100 mg slow release tablets was measured and compared. The results are summarized as follows:

**Table 2: Comparative Bioavailability Data for Slow Release Tablets - Study 1 (without food)**

<b>Diclofenac (1 x 100 mg) From measured data Geometric Mean Arithmetic Mean (CV %)</b>				
<b>Parameter</b>	<b>Apo-Diclo SR</b>	<b>Voltaren SR (Novartis, Canada)</b>	<b>% Ratio of Geometric Means</b>	<b>90% Confidence Interval</b>
AUC <sub>T</sub> (ng·hr/mL)	2500	2361	105.9	96.1 – 116.6
	2584 (25)	2435 (25)		
AUC <sub>I</sub> (ng·hr/mL)	2561	2417	105.9	96.8 – 116.0
	2643 (24)	2489 (25)		
C <sub>max</sub> (ng/mL)	529	537	98.4	80.6 – 120.2
	558 (27)	585 (42)		
T <sub>max</sub> * (hr)	3.79 (2.46)	4.07 (1.98)		
T <sub>1/2</sub> * (hr)	3.42 (1.59)	3.43 (1.40)		

\* For the T<sub>max</sub> and t<sub>1/2</sub> parameters, these are the arithmetic means (standard deviations)

**Table 3: Comparative Bioavailability Data for Slow Release Tablets - Study 2 (with food)**

Diclofenac (1 x 100 mg) From measured data Geometric Mean Arithmetic Mean (CV %)				
Parameter	Apo-Diclo SR	Voltaren SR (Novartis, Canada)	% Ratio of Geometric Means	90% Confidence Interval
AUC <sub>T</sub> (ng·hr/mL)	2704	2561	105.7	95-4 – 117.1
	2847 (36)	2724 (36)		
AUC <sub>i</sub> (ng·hr/mL)	2944	3024	100.8	92.9 – 109.4
	3094 (34)	3142 (31)		
C <sub>max</sub> (ng/mL)	351	381	92.6	72.1 – 118.9
	379 (44)	457 (59)		
T <sub>max</sub> * (hr)	6.58 (2.57)	8.79 (4.69)		
T <sub>1/2</sub> * (hr)	4.81 (3.15)	4.84 (2.69)		

\* For the T<sub>max</sub> and t<sub>1/2</sub> parameters, these are the arithmetic means (standard deviations)

Randomized clinical trials with diclofenac sodium (enteric coated tablets or slow release tablets) have NOT been designed to detect differences in cardiovascular adverse events in a chronic setting.

However, large population-based observational studies, meta-analyses and systematic reviews suggest that diclofenac use is associated with an increased risk of cardiovascular thrombotic events, including myocardial infarction and ischemic stroke. Results of some studies suggest that the CV risk is related to the dose and duration of diclofenac exposure and is greater in patients with risk factors for CV disease.

Large meta-analyses of randomized clinical trials show that diclofenac is associated with an increased risk of stroke, cardiovascular death, and death from any cause when compared with placebo. Data also suggest that diclofenac, particularly when used at a high dose (150 mg daily) may have a higher risk of thrombotic CV events than other NSAIDs.

*The information provided below supported the original registration and its subsequent amendments. These studies were conducted in accordance with the standards and regulations in force at the time of conduct of these studies.*

### **Enteric coated tablets**

The therapeutic safety and efficacy of diclofenac sodium enteric coated tablets in arthritic conditions has been investigated in both short and long-term (three months) controlled clinical studies, followed by extended controlled and non-controlled studies. The majority of the comparative studies were double blind, within patient or between patient design, using placebo and indomethacin as controls. Acetylsalicylic acid (ASA), ibuprofen, phenylbutazone and acetaminophen were also used as comparative standards.

At time of approval, the safety and efficacy of diclofenac sodium enteric coated tablets for relief of the signs and symptoms of osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis was demonstrated in short-term prospective comparative clinical trials conducted in 105 patients with osteoarthritis and 654 patients with rheumatoid arthritis. The controls used in these trials included: indomethacin, acetylsalicylic acid, acetaminophen and ibuprofen.

Several of the long-term double-blind, between patient studies comparing a three times daily dosing of diclofenac sodium enteric coated tablets to that of indomethacin were of three months duration. Patients received either drug at dosages ranging from 50 to 125 mg. In the treatment of patients with rheumatoid arthritis there was no clear difference between the treatment groups for therapeutic effect.

The safety and efficacy of diclofenac sodium enteric coated tablets compared to indomethacin for relief of the signs and symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis was also studied in longer-term studies of 6 to 30 months.

### **Slow release tablets**

Bioavailability studies have demonstrated that the absorption of active drug from the diclofenac sodium slow release (SR) tablets is similar as that reported from the diclofenac sodium enteric coated tablets with the  $C_{max}$  being attained approximately four hours after the administration of a single 100 mg diclofenac sodium SR tablet. Repeated administration of the diclofenac sodium SR tablets for seven days or longer did not result in any accumulation of active drug and food intake did not alter absorption from the diclofenac sodium SR tablet.

A regimen of multiple doses of the 75 mg diclofenac sodium SR tablet (every 12 hours) provided an equivalent  $AUC_{0-24}$  to that of the 50 mg diclofenac sodium enteric coated tablet dosed every eight hours; an indication that the 75 mg diclofenac sodium SR tablet is an effective and desirable alternate to the 50 mg diclofenac sodium enteric coated tablet for the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis or osteoarthritis.

Safety and efficacy of diclofenac sodium SR 100 mg tablets were demonstrated in a randomized, double-blind, parallel, short-term (two weeks) clinical study when compared to diclofenac sodium enteric coated tablets and placebo in patients suffering from adult onset rheumatoid arthritis. A second comparative clinical trial was conducted in patients with established osteoarthritis of the hip and knee. No statistically significant differences were seen between the 2 diclofenac sodium regimens.

## **DETAILED PHARMACOLOGY**

Diclofenac sodium is a phenyl-acetic acid derivative possessing anti-inflammatory activities as shown in various pharmacological models.

*In vitro* diclofenac sodium does not suppress proteoglycan biosynthesis in cartilage at concentrations equivalent to the concentrations reached in humans.

### **Anti-Inflammatory Activity in Rats**

The anti-inflammatory potency was assessed by testing inhibition of paw edema (carrageenin

solution and kaolin suspension) and reduction of adjuvant arthritis (Freund's adjuvant).

Preparation	Inhibition of edema induced by	
	Carrageenin (ED <sub>50</sub> mg/kg) P.O.*	Kaolin (ED <sub>50</sub> mg/kg) P.O.*
Diclofenac sodium	2.1	1.2

\*determined by graphic interpolation from 3 or more doses.

### Inhibition of Prostaglandin

A close correlation exists between certain febrile reactions and increased prostaglandin levels in the brain. Diclofenac (0.5 mcg/mL) reduces prostaglandin E<sub>2</sub> formation which parallels antipyresis but does not induce hypothermia in the afebrile animal. The inhibition of prostaglandin synthesis *in vitro* (IC<sub>50</sub> mcM/L) is 1.6.

### Platelet Adhesiveness

At 15 mcg/mL, diclofenac reduces collagen-induced aggregation in rabbit platelets by 50%. ADP-induced adhesiveness at the same dosage is similarly affected. At 10 mg/kg P.O., diclofenac protected rabbits against the lethal action of thrombokinase without untoward effects.

### Gastrointestinal Tolerability

In rats, oral doses of 17 mg/kg diclofenac sodium caused a blood loss of 150 mL in 72 hours, as measured by the administration of <sup>51</sup>Cr-labelled erythrocytes.

## TOXICOLOGY

### Acute Toxicity

Species	Route	LD <sub>50</sub> (mg/kg)	95% Confidence Limits (mg/kg)
Mouse	P.O.	389	197- 595
	I.V.	133	126 - 140
Rat	P.O.	173	133 – 213
	I.V.	106	80 - 132
Guinea-pig	P.O.	1110	950 – 1270
	I.V.	127	123 - 132
Rabbit	P.O.	194	151 - 259

The symptoms included bradycardia and convulsions.

The most frequent autopsy findings in animals that died were gastric irritation, perforation and their sequelae.

## Long-Term Toxicity Studies

Species	Period	Daily Dose mg/kg/day P.O.		
		No signs of intoxication	Reversible signs of toxicity, mainly GI Tract	Minimum lethal dose
Rat	3 months	2	-	6
	6 months	1	2	4
	98 weeks	0.25	-	1
Dog	3 months	-	0.5	2
Rhesus Monkey	6 months	-	5-15	75
Baboon	12 months	-	5	10

Diclofenac sodium was given orally to male and female rats in doses of 0.25, 1.0 and 2.0 mg/kg/day from 59 weeks (high-dose groups) to 98 weeks (low- and intermediate-dose groups). High dose-related mortality rates resulted in termination of the high-dose administration after 59 weeks; the high mortality rate was caused by severe dose-dependent ulceration of the gastrointestinal tract, with perforated ulcers leading to peritonitis and sequelae. Body-weight gains and feed consumption of the treated groups were close to the controls. Hematologic patterns showing neutrophilic leucocytosis and anemia were seen in the high- and intermediate-dose groups, particularly females at weeks 52 and 98, respectively. Female animals tended to develop enlarged adrenals and eventually experienced depressed glucose and elevated alkaline phosphatase levels. Histology studies carried out on the tissues of the control, low- and intermediate-dose groups showed drug-related changes including mucosal ulceration of the small intestine, lymphangiectasis, lymphoid hypoplasia, and plasma cell hypoplasia of the mesenteric lymph nodes, foci of hepatocytic hyperplasia, adrenal cortical atrophy and prostatitis. No increase in tumour incidence was observed in the drug-treated groups as compared to the control group.

Diclofenac sodium was administered orally in gelatin capsules once daily to baboons (*Papio spp.*) at dose levels of 0, 5, 15 (reduced to 10 on day 254) and 50 (reduced to 30 on day 38) mg/kg/day for up to 52 weeks. At all dose levels studied, diclofenac caused ulceration of the gastrointestinal tract. Ulceration was confined to the colon in the low-dose group but was present in the stomach and small intestine also in the other two groups. Body weights were below controls. Constipation, with occasional episodes of diarrhea, was a marked feature. In all treated groups, there was a dose-related fall in serum albumin levels. Anemia and an increased ESR were observed in the high-dose group. In the recovery groups (control, low, and intermediate), no intestinal lesions were present. Food consumption and body-weight gains were within normal limits. Hematology parameters were comparable to controls and serum albumin levels returned towards normal values.

## Reproduction Studies

**Rats:** Doses of 2 and 4 mg/kg/day were given orally to male and female rats with no noticeable effect on fertility. Dosing was carried out during pre-mating, mating, gestation, and lactation periods. At the higher dose, prolonged gestation and dystocia were observed. Embryotoxicity (low birth weight, failure to survive) was observed at both doses but it was minimal at 2 mg/kg/day. Post-natal survival and growth of pups from drug-treated animals were comparable to those of controls except for slightly retarded growth at the higher dose.

**Mice and Rats:** Teratology studies at oral doses of 2, 3, 10, and 20 mg/kg/day showed no teratogenic effects on fetuses. At the higher doses, pronounced gastrointestinal effects were observed in the dams and a marked toxic effect noted in fetuses (reduced birth weights and

increased fetal deaths).

**Rabbits:** Pregnant females treated with oral doses of 5 or 10 mg/animal/day throughout the gestation period showed a dose-dependent increase in resorption rates, diminished fetus weights, and abnormal skeletal findings. Definite embryotoxicity was observed at the highest dose although there was no evidence to suggest teratogenicity.

Administration of NSAIDs (including diclofenac) inhibited ovulation in the rabbit and implantation and placentation in the rat, and led to premature closure of the ductus arteriosus in the pregnant rat. Maternally toxic doses of diclofenac were associated with dystocia, prolonged gestation, decreased fetal survival, and intrauterine growth retardation in rats. The slight effects of diclofenac on reproduction parameters and delivery as well as constriction of the ductus arteriosus in utero are pharmacologic consequences of this class of prostaglandin synthesis inhibitors (see **CONTRAINDICATIONS** and **WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS – Special Populations**).

### **Mutagenicity Studies**

Mutagenicity studies were carried out *in vitro* using bacteria with, and without microsomal activation, and in mammalian cells. Studies *in vivo* were also performed. Diclofenac sodium was not mutagenic in any of these test systems.

### **Carcinogenicity Studies**

Long-term carcinogenicity studies in rats given diclofenac sodium up to 2 mg/kg/day have revealed no significant increases in tumour incidence. There was a positive dose-related trend with respect to adrenal medullary hyperplasia, mammary fibroadenomas and subcutaneous tissue fibromas in females, as well as of C-cell adenomas of the thyroid in males. The differences in the incidence between the various groups, including control, were small and were considered to reflect the variation in the spontaneous occurrence of these incidental lesions, common in old laboratory rats.

In a 2-year mouse study, only controls and animals at the two lower daily doses of 0.1 and 0.3 mg/kg showed survival sufficient for assessment of carcinogenic potential. The two higher daily doses of 1 and 2 mg/kg resulted in a shortening of lifespan, particularly in males, as a consequence of ulceration and/or perforation of the small intestine and therefore prevented evaluation. The known susceptibility of rodents to non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, resulting in high mortality at dose levels close to the therapeutic dose, is considered to be a rodent-specific effect. Diclofenac sodium was not carcinogenic to mice under the conditions of this study.

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### **PART III: CONSUMER INFORMATION**

#### **PrAPO-DICLO**

Diclofenac Sodium Enteric Coated Tablets  
25 mg and 50 mg

#### **PrAPO-DICLO SR**

Diclofenac Sodium Slow Release Tablets  
75 mg and 100 mg

Read this information each time you refill your prescription in case new information has been added.

This leaflet is Part III of a three-part "Product Monograph" published when APO-DICLO/APO-DICLO SR were approved for sale in Canada and is designed specifically for Consumers. This leaflet is a summary and will NOT tell you everything about APO-DICLO/APO-DICLO SR. Contact your doctor or pharmacist if you have any questions about the drug.

### **ABOUT THIS MEDICATION**

#### **What the Medication is used for:**

Your health care provider has prescribed APO-DICLO or APO-DICLO SR for you to relieve pain and swelling in rheumatoid arthritis and osteoarthritis, including degenerative joint disease of the hip.

#### **What it does:**

APO-DICLO and APO-DICLO SR (diclofenac sodium), as nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), can reduce the chemicals prostaglandins produced by your body which cause pain and swelling.

APO-DICLO and APO-DICLO SR, as nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) do NOT cure your illness or prevent it from getting worse. APO-DICLO or APO-DICLO SR can only relieve pain and reduce swelling as long as you continue to take it.

#### **When it should not be used:**

**DO NOT TAKE APO-DICLO or APO-DICLO SR if you have any of the following conditions:**

- Heart bypass surgery (planning to have or recently had)
- Severe, uncontrolled heart failure
- Bleeding in the brain or other bleeding disorders
- Current pregnancy (after 28 weeks of pregnancy)
- Currently breastfeeding (or planning to breastfeed)
- Allergy (hypersensitivity) to diclofenac sodium, or ASA (Acetylsalicylic Acid) or other NSAIDs (Nonsteroidal Anti-inflammatory Drugs), or any of the nonmedicinal ingredients in APO-DICLO or

#### **APO-DICLO SR.**

- Ulcer (active)
- Bleeding or perforation from the stomach or gut (active)
- Inflammatory bowel disease (Crohn's Disease or Ulcerative Colitis)
- Liver disease (active or severe)
- Kidney problems (severe or worsening)
- High potassium in the blood

Patients who took a drug in the same class as APO-DICLO and APO-DICLO SR after a type of heart surgery (coronary artery bypass grafting (CABG)) were more likely to have heart attacks, strokes, blood clots in the leg(s) or lung(s), and infections or other complications than those who did NOT take that drug.

APO-DICLO and APO-DICLO SR should NOT be used in patients under 16 years of age since the safety and effectiveness have NOT been established.

#### **What the medicinal ingredient is:**

diclofenac sodium

#### **What the non-medicinal ingredients are:**

Each enteric coated tablet contains the non-medicinal ingredients colloidal silicon dioxide, dextrates, D&C yellow #10 (25 mg tablet) FD & C yellow #6, ferric oxide yellow, hydroxypropyl methylcellulose, methanol, magnesium stearate, methylcellulose, polyethylene glycol, polyvinylacetate phthalate stearic acid, titanium dioxide and triethyl citrate.

Each slow release tablet contains the non-medicinal ingredients dextrates, ferric oxide red, hydroxyethyl cellulose, hydroxypropyl methylcellulose, magnesium stearate, microcrystalline cellulose, polyethylene glycol and titanium dioxide.

#### **What dosage forms it comes in:**

APO-DICLO 25 mg (enteric coated): yellow, round, identified '25' on one side.

APO-DICLO 50 mg (enteric coated): light brown, round, identified '50' on one side.

APO-DICLO SR (slow release) 75 mg: light pink, triangular, identified 'APO' over '75' on one side.

APO-DICLO SR (slow release) 100 mg: pink, round, identified 'APO' over '100' on one side.

Check with your pharmacist if the identifying markings or color appear different.

### **WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS**

If you have, or previously had, any of the following conditions, see your health care provider to discuss treatment options other than APO-DICLO or APO-DICLO SR:

- **Heart Attack or Angina**
- **Stroke or Mini-stroke**
- **Loss of Vision**
- **Current Pregnancy (less than 28 weeks)**
- **Congestive Heart Failure**
- **High blood pressure**
- **Diabetes**
- **High levels of fats in your blood**
- **Smoking**

**It is important to take the lowest dose of APO-DICLO and APO-DICLO SR that relieves your pain and/or swelling and for the shortest time possible in order to keep your risk of side effects on the heart and blood vessels as small as possible.**

**Use of NSAIDs, such as APO-DICLO and/or APO-DICLO SR can result in increased blood pressure and /or worsening of congestive heart failure.**

**Use of NSAIDs, such as APO-DICLO and APO-DICLO SR, may cause stomach and bowel problems (such as ulceration, perforation, obstruction and bleeding).**

Before taking this medication, tell your health care provider if you have any of the following:

- Disease of the heart or blood vessels (also called cardiovascular disease, including uncontrolled high blood pressure, congestive heart failure, established ischemic heart disease, or peripheral arterial disease), as treatment with APO-DICLO and APO-DICLO SR in these cases is not recommended.
- Risk factors for cardiovascular disease (see above) such as high blood pressure, abnormally high levels of fat (cholesterol, triglycerides) in your blood, diabetes, or if you smoke.
- Diabetes mellitus or on a low sugar diet
- Atherosclerosis
- Poor circulation to your extremities
- Kidney disease or urine problems
- Previous ulcer or bleeding from the stomach or gut
- If you recently had a surgery of the stomach or intestinal tract (intestines, colon, rectum, anus)
- Previous bleeding in the brain
- Bleeding problems
- Family history of allergy to NSAIDs, such as acetylsalicylic acid (ASA), celecoxib, diclofenac, diflunisal, etodolac, fenoprofen, flurbiprofen, ibuprofen, indomethacin, ketoprofen, ketorolac, mefenamic acid, meloxicam, nabumetone, naproxen, oxaprozin, piroxicam, rofecoxib, sulindac, tenoxicam, tiaprofenic acid, tolmetin, or valdecoxib (NOT a complete list)
- Family history of asthma, nasal polyps, long-term swelling of the sinus (chronic sinusitis) or hives

Also, before taking this medication, tell your health care provider if you are planning to get pregnant.

While taking this medication:

- Tell any other doctor, dentist, pharmacist or other health care professional that you see, that you are taking this medication, especially if you are planning to have heart surgery, or surgery of the stomach or intestinal tract;
- Do NOT drink alcoholic beverages while taking this medication because you would be more likely to develop stomach problems;
- Fertility may be decreased. The use of APO-DICLO or APO-DICLO SR is not recommended in women trying to get pregnant. In women who have difficulty conceiving, stopping APO-DICLO or APO-DICLO SR should be considered.
- If you have cardiovascular disease or risks for cardiovascular disease, your doctor will periodically re-evaluate whether you should continue treatment with APO-DICLO or APO-DICLO SR.
- Your doctor will monitor your kidney function, your liver function and your blood count to decide if APO-DICLO or APO-DICLO SR needs to be discontinued or if the dose needs to be changed.

If, at any time while taking APO-DICLO or APO-DICLO SR you experience any signs or symptoms of problems with your heart or blood vessels such as chest pain, shortness of breath, weakness, or slurring of speech, contact your doctor immediately.

**Long-term use of APO-DICLO or APO-DICLO SR might increase the risk of heart attacks or strokes.**

**APO-DICLO or APO-DICLO SR is NOT recommended for use in patients under 16 years of age since safety and effectiveness have NOT been established.**

## **INTERACTIONS WITH THIS MEDICATION**

### **What About Taking Other Drugs At The Same Time?**

See your health care provider and pharmacist if you are taking any other medication (prescription or non-prescription) such as any of the following (NOT a complete list):

- Acetaminophen
- Acetylsalicylic Acid (ASA) or other NSAIDs e.g. ASA, celecoxib, diclofenac, ibuprofen, indomethacin, ketorolac, meloxicam, naproxen
- Alcohol
- Antacids
- Anti-depressants
- Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs) e.g. citalopram, fluoxetine, paroxetine, sertraline
- Blood pressure medications
  - ACE (angiotensin converting enzyme) inhibitors e.g. enalapril, lisinopril, perindopril,

**IMPORTANT: PLEASE READ**

- ramipril ARBs (angiotensin II receptor blockers)  
e.g. candesartan, irbesartan, losartan, valsartan
- Beta-blockers e.g. metoprolol
- Blood thinners (medicine used to prevent blood clotting) e.g. warfarin, ASA, clopidogrel
- Corticosteroids (including glucocorticoids) (medicines used to provide relief for inflamed areas of the body)  
e.g. prednisone
- Cyclosporine (a medicine primarily used in patients who have received organ transplants)
- Digoxin (a medicine used for heart problems)
- Diuretics (medicines used to increase the amount of urine) e.g. furosemide, hydrochlorothiazide
- Lithium
- Methotrexate (a medicine used to treat some kinds of cancer or arthritis)
- Oral hypoglycemics (diabetes medications such as metformin)
- Phenytoin (a medicine used to treat seizures).
- Probenecid
- Quinolone antibacterials (medicines used against infection)
- Rifampin (an antibiotic medicine used to treat bacterial infections)
- Sulfapyrazone (a medicine used to treat gout)
- Tacrolimus (a medicine primarily used in patients who have received organ transplants)
- Trimethoprim (a medicine used to prevent or treat urinary tract infection)
- Voriconazole (a medicine used to treat fungal infections)

Your health care provider may prescribe low dose ASA (acetylsalicylic acid) as a blood thinner to reduce your risk of having a heart attack or stroke while you are taking APO-DICLO or APO-DICLO SR. Take only the amount of ASA prescribed by your health care provider. You are more likely to upset or damage your stomach if you take both APO-DICLO or APO-DICLO SR and ASA than if you took APO-DICLO or APO-DICLO SR alone.

**PROPER USE OF THIS MEDICATION**

APO-DICLO and APO-DICLO S is used for maintenance therapy only.

**Usual dose:**

Medical Condition	Maintenance Dose	Maximum Dose (per day)
<b>APO-DICLO 25 mg and 50 mg enteric coated tablets</b>		
Rheumatoid Arthritis	50 mg twice daily	100 mg
Osteoarthritis	50 mg twice daily	100 mg
<b>APO-DICLO SR 75 mg and 100 mg slow release tablets</b>		

Medical Condition	Maintenance Dose	Maximum Dose (per day)
Rheumatoid Arthritis	75 mg once daily	100 mg
Osteoarthritis	75 mg once daily	100 mg

Take APO-DICLO or APO-DICLO SR only as directed by your health care provider. **Do NOT take more of it, do NOT take it more often and do NOT take it for a longer period of time than your health care provider recommended. If possible, you should take the lowest dose of this medication for the shortest time period.** Taking too much APO-DICLO or APO-DICLO SR may increase your chances of unwanted and sometimes dangerous side effects, especially if you are elderly and frail or if you have a low body weight, have other diseases or take other medications.

If you will be using APO-DICLO or APO-DICLO SR for more than 7 days, see your health care provider regularly to discuss whether this medicine is working for you and if it is causing you any unwanted effects.

Swallow the tablet whole with water, do not chew or divide the tablet. It is best to take your dose at the same time each day.

To help reduce the possibility of stomach upset you should take APO-DICLO or APO-DICLO SR tablets immediately after a meal or with food or milk. Also, you should remain standing or sitting upright (i.e. do not lie down) for about 15 to 30 minutes after taking the medicine. This helps to prevent irritation that may lead to trouble swallowing. If stomach upset (indigestion, nausea, vomiting, stomach pain or diarrhea) occurs and continues, contact your doctor.

**This medication has been prescribed specifically for you. Do NOT give it to anyone else. It may harm them, even if their symptoms seem to be similar to yours.**

**Missed dose:**

If you forget to take your scheduled dose, you should not double the next scheduled dose to make up for the missed dose.

**Overdose**

If you think you have taken too much APO-DICLO TABLETS or APO-DICLO SR, contact your healthcare professional, hospital emergency department or regional poison control centre immediately, even if there are no symptoms.

**SIDE EFFECTS AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT THEM**

APO-DICLO or APO-DICLO SR may cause some

**IMPORTANT: PLEASE READ**

side effects, especially when used for a long time or in large doses. When these side effects occur, you may require medical attention. Report all symptoms or side effects to your health care provider.

APO-DICLO or APO-DICLO SR may cause you to become drowsy or tired. Be careful about driving or participating in activities that require you to be alert. If you become drowsy, dizzy or light-headed after taking APO-DICLO or APO-DICLO SR, do NOT drive or operate machinery.

APO-DICLO or APO-DICLO SR may cause you to become more sensitive to sunlight. Any exposure to sunlight or sunlamps may cause sunburn, skin blisters, skin rash, redness, itching or discoloration, or vision changes. If you have a reaction from the sun, check with your health care provider.

Check with your health care provider IMMEDIATELY if you develop chills, fever, muscle aches or pains, or other flu-like symptoms, especially if they occur before or together with a skin rash. These symptoms may be the first signs of a SERIOUS ALLERGIC REACTION to this medication.

<b>SERIOUS SIDE EFFECTS AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT THEM</b>		
<b>Symptom</b>	<b>STOP taking APO-DICLO or APO-DICLO SR and get emergency medical attention IMMEDIATELY</b>	<b>STOP taking APO-DICLO or APO-DICLO SR and talk to your physician or pharmacist</b>
Bloody or black tarry stools, vomiting blood	√	
Spontaneous bleeding or bruising (signs of thrombocytopenia)	√	
Shortness of breath, wheezing, any trouble breathing or chest tightness	√	
Skin rash, hives, swelling or itching	√	
Skin rash with flaking or peeling (signs of dermatitis exfoliative).	√	
Purple skin patches (signs of purpura or Henoch-Schonlein purpura if caused by an allergy).	√	
Blurred vision, or any visual disturbance	√	
Any change in the amount or colour of your urine (red or	√	

<b>SERIOUS SIDE EFFECTS AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT THEM</b>		
<b>Symptom</b>	<b>STOP taking APO-DICLO or APO-DICLO SR and get emergency medical attention IMMEDIATELY</b>	<b>STOP taking APO-DICLO or APO-DICLO SR and talk to your physician or pharmacist</b>
brown)		
Any pain or difficulty experienced while urinating		√
Swelling of the feet, lower legs; weight gain		√
Swelling mainly of the face, throat, lips, tongue, and/or extremities (signs of angioedema)		√
Vomiting or persistent indigestion, nausea, stomach pain or diarrhea		√
Chest pain and allergic reactions happening at the same time (signs of Kounis syndrome)	√	
Yellow discoloration of the skin or eyes (signs of liver failure), with or without itchy skin		√
Malaise, fatigue, loss of appetite or « flu-like » symptoms		√
Headaches, stiff neck, fever, nausea, vomiting (signs of aseptic meningitis)		√
Mental confusion, depression		√
Dizziness, lightheadedness		√
Hearing problems		√
Rectal itching or bleeding		√
Right upper abdominal discomfort or pain		√

This is NOT a complete list of side effects. If you develop any other symptoms while taking APO-DICLO and/or APO-DICLO SR, see your health care provider.

**HOW TO STORE IT**

Store at room temperature between (15°C to 30°C) and protect from high humidity.

**Do NOT keep outdated medicine or medicine no longer needed.** Any outdated or unused medicine should be returned to your pharmacist.

**Keep this and all medication out of the reach of children.**

### **REPORTING SUSPECTED SIDE EFFECTS**

#### **Reporting Side Effects**

You can report any suspected side effects associated with the use of health products to Health Canada by:

- Visiting the Web page on Adverse Reaction Reporting (<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/medeffect-canada/adverse-reaction-reporting.html>) for information on how to report online, by mail or by fax; or
- Calling toll-free at 1-866-234-2345.

*NOTE: Contact your health professional if you need information about how to manage your side effects. The Canada Vigilance Program does not provide medical advice.*

### **MORE INFORMATION**

**If you want more information about APO-DICLO or APO-DICLO SR:**

- Talk to your healthcare professional
- Find the full product monograph that is prepared for healthcare professionals and includes this Consumer Information by visiting the Health Canada website (<https://health-products.canada.ca/dpd-bdpp/index-eng.jsp>). Find the Consumer Information on the manufacturer's website (<http://www.apotex.ca/products>) or by calling 1-800-667-4708.

This leaflet was prepared by Apotex Inc., Toronto, Ontario, M9L 1T9.

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