

Generic Name: Phenytoin
Brand Name: Dilantin

What Is It Used For?

- Decreasing seizure activity in various types of seizures.
- Given intravenously in the emergency department for status epilepticus.

How Long Does The Oral Medicine Take To Work?

- 7-20 days

What Are The Important Safety Concerns?

- Make sure your child is taking good care of his/her mouth, gums and teeth.
- When first starting the medicine, your child may be slightly drowsy and/or dizzy.
- Only adjust the dosage as recommended by your health care provider. They will usually increase this medication slowly to avoid side effects. Never increase the dosage more than **once per week** unless directed otherwise.
- Once you have started with one brand of the medication stay with it. Avoid switching between different brands.
- Check with your pharmacist before taking herbal medications and/or over-the-counter medications. They may have adverse effects if taken with anti-seizure medications.
- Do not stop taking this medication suddenly because this could result in seizures.
- It is important to keep a record of seizures and side effects to determine how well your child is responding to the medication. **Please bring these records to all clinic appointments**
- **Always bring all your child's medications to every clinic appointment**

Does My Child Need Bloodwork With This Medication?

- A blood test will be done before starting this medication to check your child's liver function and blood counts. If the blood tests are normal, it is very safe for your child to take this medication.
- Routine blood work may be done to help determine the best dosage for your child, and also if he/she has side effects to the medication.
- If your child is required to have blood work it must be done BEFORE he/she gets the medication. This is called a trough level. This level usually falls between 20 and 80.

What Medications May Alter The Effectiveness Of This Drug?

- Vigabatrin can decrease the level of Phenytoin in your child's body.
- Phenobarbital, Carbamazepine (Tegretol) and Valproic Acid (Epival, Depakene) may raise or lower Phenytoin levels in your child's body.
- Phenytoin decreases Topiramate and Lamotrigine levels in your child's body.

What Are The Possible Side Effects?

- Headache*
- Constipation*
- Nausea & Vomiting*
- Drowsiness*
- Swelling of the Gums*
- Increased Hair Growth*
- Nervousness*
- Tremors*
- Trouble Sleeping*
- Fatigue*
- Rash
- Note: may increase myoclonic seizures
- Slurred Speech
- Loss of Coordination
- Tingling Feeling
- Dizziness
- Blurred Vision

*more common side effects

How Do I Give The Medication?

- It is best to give this medication 1 hour before a meal or 2 hours after a meal to get the best absorption.
- You may crush the tablet and mix with food or fluid. Most often it is given in a liquid form to infants and young children.
- Give with food or milk to reduce stomach upset if needed. Do not give with antacid Medication.
- Give your child the medication as close to the same time as possible each day and only the amount prescribed.
- If your child misses a dose, give the dose as soon as you remember or can. If the next dose of the medicine needs to be given in less than 4 hours, do **not** give the dose you forgot. Give the next dose a little earlier and then return to giving the medicine at the usual times after that.
- If your child vomits within 30 minutes of taking the medication, repeat the dose.
- If your child vomits after 30 minutes of taking the medication, do not repeat the dose.

When Do I Call My Health Care Provider?

Call your health care provider or go to your nearest emergency room if you are concerned about your child in any way. With Phenytoin the following would be of concern

- A rash
- More seizures
- Increased sleepiness
- Unusual bleeding or bruising
- Slurred speech or blurred vision
- Tiny purple spots on skin
- Yellow colored skin or eyes

What Are The Available Forms And Dosages?

- 30 mg Capsule
- 100 mg Capsule
- 50 mg Infatab
- 30 mg/5 ml syrup
- 125 mg/ 5 ml syrup

**Always ask your pharmacist for the concentration of the medication if you are giving the liquid preparation to your child. Try to stay with the same concentration at all times.