



Medications at Home: Phenobarbital (Seizures)

The neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) team celebrates with you as your baby goes home! After graduation from the NICU, your baby will need medication to stay well.

Why does my baby need this medication?

- Phenobarbital is used to prevent or treat seizures (convulsions).
- This medication also is used to treat sluggish gallbladder (direct hyperbilirubinemia).

How, how much, and when is this medication given to my baby?

- Phenobarbital is given by mouth.
- The amount of medicine has been carefully calculated based on your baby's weight and needed response from the medicine. Do not change the dosage or stop this medication without talking to your baby's provider.
- Dose Instructions: Measure the oral liquid medicine with a marked measuring spoon, oral syringe, or medicine cup. Administer with water, milk, or juice.

What are possible side effects?

- Sleepiness
- Constipation, nausea, or vomiting
- Nervousness
- Skin flushing (redness)

Call your baby's healthcare provider right away if your baby has

- rapid or slow heartbeat
- skin rash, peeling, or itching
- decreased number of wet diapers/problems urinating
- lack of sweating (in older child)
- shortness of breath or wheezing
- excitement or increased activity
- fever.

What if my baby misses a dose or spits up the medication?

- Give the missed dose as soon as you remember it. If it is almost time for the next dose, skip the missed dose and stick to the regular medication schedule.
- **Never** give a double dose.
- Call your baby's provider if your baby misses two or more doses or spits up the medication.

Important Medication Safety Tips

- Only give your baby medicines prescribed by your baby's healthcare provider. Do not share prescription medicines with other children or adults.
- Check with your baby's provider before giving your baby any over-the-counter medicines.
- Keep all medicines out of reach of children, closed tightly in the bottle or container it came in, and with the label of directions given by the pharmacy.
- Give phenobarbital exactly as directed by your baby's provider.
 - Never stop phenobarbital or give more or less than prescribed without first talking with your baby's provider. Too little may not be enough to help, and too much may cause harm. In case of overdose, immediately call the Poison Control Center at 800.222.1222. If you cannot wake your baby or he or she has stopped breathing, start cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and call your local emergency medical services or 911 right away.



- Store phenobarbital at room temperature and away from excess heat and damp areas like the bathroom.
- Your baby may need to have blood tests while on this medicine.
- Always use the five *rights* when giving medication to your baby:
 - Right baby (if other children are in the home)
 - Right medication
 - Right amount (always measure the dose with the syringe or dropper provided by the pharmacy, not a common household teaspoon)
 - Right time
 - Right way (exactly as prescribed and directed by your baby's provider).

The above information is to help you better understand your baby's care. Always follow the instructions given by your baby's health-care provider and pharmacist. It's always OK to ask questions if you have concerns about your baby.

Online Resources

American Academy of Pediatrics
www.aap.org

HealthFinder.gov
www.healthfinder.gov

Institute for Safe Medication Practices
www.consumermedsafety.org

Kids Health
www.kidshealth.org

Medline Plus: Drug Information
www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/druginfo/meds

U.S. Food and Drug Administration
www.fda.gov