

PHENYTOIN

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If you suffer from seizures you may be prescribed Phenytoin. You may also be familiar with its brand name; Dilantin. Phenytoin is a high alert medication, which means if you do not take it exactly as prescribed it may cause illness or injury.

To understand how Phenytoin works, let's look at how seizures are caused in your body.

Your brain is constantly firing information and messages to the rest of your body, telling you what to think, what to feel and what to do. When you suffer from seizures, your brain is firing messages that are out of control.

Phenytoin slows down the uncontrolled electrical activity in your brain that causes seizures.

Phenytoin comes in a chewable tablet, capsule or liquid. Your healthcare provider will decide how much you need to take and how best to take it.

Phenytoin is a powerful medication. Some people should not take it. Do not take Phenytoin if you are allergic to the ingredients in it.

If you are pregnant, or planning to get pregnant, tell your healthcare provider before taking Phenytoin. A different medication may be safer for you and your baby. Do not breastfeed while taking Phenytoin.

Before taking Phenytoin, tell your healthcare provider if you have a history of: liver disease, heart problems, thyroid problems, or porphyria.

In case of emergency, wear an alert bracelet and carry a wallet card to let all healthcare providers know you are taking Phenytoin.

Before taking Phenytoin, give your healthcare provider a complete list of all other medications you use, including vitamins and herbal supplements.

Some side effects of Phenytoin include: nausea or vomiting, constipation, tremors, slurred speech, headache, dizziness, rash, trouble with balance, eye problems, taste disturbance, and sleep problems.

If you do notice any of these side effects contact your healthcare provider about how to manage them.

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Be aware that you are at an increased risk of falling while taking Phenytoin. Get up from a sitting or lying position slowly.

Do not drive or operate heavy machinery, including your car, until you know how Phenytoin affects you.

Be aware that drinking alcohol while taking Phenytoin can increase certain side effects.

If you have an allergic reaction like: trouble breathing, hives, or swelling of your face or throat; call 911.

If you have: sore throat, skin rash, bruise more easily, nausea and vomiting, stomach pain, dark urine, yellowing of the eyes and skin, bone pain in your hips or legs, severe skin reaction, or changes in your mood or behavior; call your healthcare provider right away.

This is not the complete list of side effects. Make sure you discuss all possible side effects with your healthcare provider.

Take Phenytoin exactly as prescribed. Do not change your dose or take it for longer than prescribed.

If you have been prescribed liquid Phenytoin, shake the liquid well and then use a dose measuring spoon or medicine cup to make sure you get the correct amount. Do not use a regular kitchen spoon.

Take your medication at the same time each day to avoid missing a dose. Try setting an alert on your phone or watch so you don't forget. If you miss a dose, take your Phenytoin as soon as possible. If it is almost time for your next dose, skip your missed dose and return to your normal medication schedule.

Do not double dose. If you think you have taken too much Phenytoin, call 911. An overdose can lead to death.

Even if you feel fine, do not stop taking your medication unless your healthcare provider tells you to. If you suddenly stop taking this medication you may have an increased risk of seizures.

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Store Phenytoin away from moisture and direct sunlight. Your bathroom medicine cabinet is not the best place because of moisture. Do not leave your medication where it could get too hot or too cold.

Always store your medication out of sight and out of reach of children to prevent accidents.

When you are done taking Phenytoin tablets, crush all of your remaining pills and mix them with undesirable trash like kitty litter or coffee grounds. Dispose of liquid Phenytoin by flushing it down a drain or toilet.

Do not sell or give your Phenytoin to anyone else. It is against the law and can seriously harm anyone else taking it. Contact your local police station for more information on proper disposal directions.

Phenytoin can help you manage seizures. But it is a powerful medication that should only be taken exactly as prescribed. If you have any questions about Phenytoin, ask your healthcare provider and pharmacist for more information.