About your medication

PHENOBARBITONE

(Phenobarbitone tablets 30mg, mixture 3mg/mL)

Other brands may be available
 WHAT IS PHENOBARBITONE?
Phenobarbitone is a long acting barbiturate. It is only available on a doctor’s prescription.

 WHAT IS IT FOR?
Phenobarbitone is used to prevent seizures (fitting). Your child’s doctor may have prescribed it for another reason.

 HOW TO TAKE THIS MEDICINE
The dose of phenobarbitone has been adjusted to suit your child. This dose may be given once a day or every 12 hours as directed by the doctor.

This medicine may take several weeks to reach effective blood levels for controlling seizures.

Blood tests may be taken to ensure the drug is given at the best dose.

It is important to measure liquid doses accurately with an oral syringe or measuring cup/spoon. Tablets can be crushed for administration.

Do not suddenly stop giving this medication without consulting your doctor as sudden withdrawal of phenobarbitone can result in unpleasant symptoms including seizures. If phenobarbitone needs to be ceased, it should be reduced gradually under your doctor’s supervision.

 WHAT TO DO IF A DOSE IS MISSED
If you miss a dose of the medication it can be taken as soon as you remember. Do not give it if it is less than four hours before the next dose. Do not double-up on any doses.

 STORING THE MEDICINE
It is important to keep phenobarbitone locked away out of the reach of children. Do not keep the medicine in the bathroom, near the kitchen sink or in other damp, warm places because this may make them less effective. Store in a cool, dry place, away from heat and direct light. The mixture comes in a bottle with a child resistant lid. Do not remove the lid from this bottle until the dose is needed.

 USE OF OTHER MEDICINES
Care must be taken when using phenobarbitone with some other medications. Check with your doctor or pharmacist before giving any prescription medicine or medicine purchased without prescription from a pharmacy, supermarket, or health food shop. This is important for:

• Other medicines which may make your child sleepy including sedatives, strong pain relievers, cold or allergy medicines or some antihistamines.
• Warfarin or other anti-coagulants (blood thinners).
• Some antibiotics and antifungal agents e.g. Doxycycline, Metronidazole.
• Other drugs used for seizures e.g. Valproate, Phenytoin. This list is not complete. Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about possible interactions with any over-the-counter or complementary medicines or recreational substances (e.g. alcohol).

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

• The strength of the mixture you have been given is 3mg per mL. This is a special mixture prepared for hospital use. If repeat prescriptions cannot be obtained from your hospital it is important that both your doctor and pharmacist know the strength of this mixture to avoid incorrect dosage.

• The RCH pharmacy may prepare special dosage forms (e.g. mixtures) if you have a prescription written by a RCH doctor. *These may take some time to prepare, so please notify the RCH pharmacy 2-3 working days in advance.*

• This medication may make your child sleepy or dizzy. Care must be taken with activities such as riding bikes or climbing trees, or for older children, driving cars or boats or operating machinery, until you know how this medicine will affect your child.

**POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS**

Side effects can occur while taking phenobarbitone. Some of these are not serious and will go away with time or after the dose has been changed. Others are more serious and require you to check with your doctor.

**Less serious side effects include:**

• drowsiness, dizziness, unsteadiness
• nausea and vomiting
• irritability, excitement or nervousness
• constipation or diarrhoea

**More Serious** *(Contact doctor as soon as possible if any of the following occur):*

• severe drowsiness or difficulty arousing

**Allergic reaction** *(Stop medicine and see doctor immediately):*

• skin rash, itching or hives, swollen mouth or lips, wheezing or difficulty breathing.
This leaflet answers some common questions about your child’s medicine. It does not contain all available information. It does not take the place of talking to your child’s doctor or pharmacist. The leaflet may differ from information in the manufacturer’s Consumer Medicine Information. The information in this leaflet reflects the usage of medicine under medical supervision by patients of The Royal Children’s Hospital. Medicine may be used in children in different ways or for different reasons than in adults - for more information see the leaflet "Medicines for Children". This leaflet includes information current at the time of review of the document – OCTOBER 2010.