

***About your medication***

**PHENYTOIN**

(Dilantin® 50mg chewable tablets,  
30mg and 100mg capsules,  
Suspension 30mg/5mL)

*Other brands may be available*

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## WHAT IS PHENYTOIN?

Phenytoin is from a group of medications called anti-epileptics or anti-convulsants. It is only available on a doctor's prescription.

## WHAT IS IT FOR?

It is used to control seizures (fits) in most forms of epilepsy. Phenytoin may be prescribed with other anti-epileptic drugs.

## HOW TO TAKE THIS MEDICINE

It is important that this medication is taken only as directed and not given to other people.

Take phenytoin with food or following meals at the same time each day to reduce stomach irritation. This also helps the dose to be absorbed in the same way each day. Give with at least half a glass of water.

*Chewable tablets* may be swallowed whole, chewed or crushed before swallowing.

*Suspension* needs to be shaken well before use. Measure dose accurately with syringe or measuring glass/metric spoon.

Regular blood tests will be needed to measure the level of phenytoin to achieve the correct dosage and prevent toxic effects. It takes several weeks before phenytoin levels in the blood are constant.

## 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 take the missed dose if it is close to the next one; just take the next dose as normal. **Do not double up on any doses.** If you miss two doses or more call your doctor.

## STORING THE MEDICINE

It is important to keep phenytoin 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.

## USE OF OTHER MEDICINES

Care must be taken when using phenytoin 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.

Care is required when phenytoin is taken with other medications that can cause any drowsiness such as anti-histamines, sedatives, tranquillisers and other anti-epileptics.

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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. phenytoin).

### IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- There may be variation between different brands of phenytoin and you should ensure your child has sufficient supply of one brand if travelling overseas.
- Do not switch between capsules and tablets routinely as they are slightly different.
- Do not suddenly stop giving this medicine without first checking with your child's doctor.
- Good dental hygiene and visiting your dentist on a regular basis can help avoid any potential gum problems.
- Phenytoin can affect how alert your child is. Your child should avoid things like riding bikes or climbing trees until you know how they are affected.
- If your child is on enteral feeding preparations and/or related nutritional supplements, more regular blood tests will be required. Sometimes the dose of phenytoin is affected by the feed.
- This medicine may cause the urine to turn pink or brown in colour. This is normal.

### POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS

Side effects can occur while taking phenytoin. 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:

- loss of appetite, nausea or vomiting
- drowsiness or dizziness, forgetfulness or reduced concentration
- nervousness or trouble sleeping
- constipation
- excess hair growth (common in young girls)
- coarsening of facial features (e.g. thickening of the lips)
- swollen, tender gums (common in children)

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

- increase in the number of fits
- slurred speech, severe confusion or unsteadiness
- blurred or double vision
- uncontrolled eye or body movements

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

- skin rash, itching or hives, swollen mouth or lips, wheezing or difficulty breathing

**IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS CONTACT**



***Your Child's Doctor via the RCH Switchboard on 03 9345 5522***

**OR**

***Pharmacy Department on 03 9345 5492***

***IN CASE OF POISONING OR OVERDOSE CONTACT***

***POISONS INFORMATION CENTRE 13 11 26 (24 hour service)***

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.