Phenytoin
(Dilantin)

Common Drug Name
Phenytoin

Common Brand Names
Dilantin

Generic products are available.

Storage
Store at room temperature in a tight, light resistant, childproof container, protected from moisture.

Uses
Treatment of epilepsy and seizures in dogs, although other antiseizure medications with fewer side effects are more commonly used. Also used for treating irregular heart rates (ventricular arrhythmias) due to digoxin in dogs.

Dose and Administration
Always follow the dosage instructions provided by your veterinarian. If you have difficulty giving the medication, contact your veterinarian.

For seizure control, it is usually necessary to treat for the lifetime of the pet.

Record the date, time, severity, length, and circumstances of any seizure your pet has while taking phenobarbital, and provide this information to your veterinarian.

IMPORTANT: Do NOT miss a dose. Missing a dose could cause a seizure. If you miss a dose, give it as soon as you remember. If it is almost time for the next dose, skip the one you missed and go back to the regular schedule. Do not give 2 doses at once.

This medication should only be given to the pet for whom it was prescribed.

Possible Side Effects
Side effects include loss of appetite, vomiting, staggering, sedation, and excessive gingival (gum tissue) growth. Side effects involving the liver include jaundice (yellowing of the gums, skin, or eyes). Consult your veterinarian if you notice any of these side effects.

Cats: In addition to the above effects, may also see skin lesions.

If your pet experiences an allergic reaction to the medication, signs may include facial swelling, hives, scratching, sudden onset of diarrhea, vomiting, shock, seizures, pale gums, cold limbs, or coma. If you observe any of these signs, contact your veterinarian immediately.

Precautions
Not for use in animals hypersensitive (allergic) to it.

Not recommended for use in cats and kittens. Use under strict veterinarian supervision in puppies.

Do not use in pregnant or lactating animals (female animals nursing their young).

Do not use in animals with certain types of heart or liver disease.

Consult with your veterinarian regarding the physical examinations and laboratory testing necessary prior to and during treatment with phenytoin.

Drug, Food and Test Interactions
Consult your veterinarian before using phenytoin with any other medications, including vitamins and supplements, allopurinol, cimetidine, chloramphenicol, diazepam, isoniazid, phenylbutazone, sulfonamides, trimethoprim, valproic acid, salicylates, and chlorpheniramine, barbiturates, diazoxide, folic acid, theophylline, antacids, antineoplastics, calcium, enteral feedings, nitrofurantoin, and pyridoxine, corticosteroids, disopyramide, doxycycline, estrogens, quinidine, dopamine, and furosemide, since interactions may occur.

Increased risk of liver damage if used with primidone or phenobarbital.

Phenytoin may decrease some properties of meperidine while increasing its toxic effects.

Lithium toxicity may be enhanced.

Pyridoxine (Vitamin B6) may decrease the levels of phenytoin in the blood.

Give with food to decrease vomiting and to increase absorption.

Signs of Toxicity/Overdose
Signs include liver disease (jaundice), depression, loss of appetite, staggering, low blood pressure, slowed breathing, coma, and death.

If you know or suspect your pet has had an overdose, or if you observe any of these signs in your pet, contact your veterinarian immediately.

Keep this and all other medications out of the reach of children and pets.