Phenobarbital
(Solfoton)

Common Drug Name
Phenobarbital

Common Brand Names
Solfoton

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

Uses
Used in dogs, cats, and ferrets for long-term control of epilepsy and seizures.

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

Blood tests are used to monitor the level of the drug in the blood. It may take a week for the level of the drug in the blood to stabilize after a dose change.

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.

You will need a new prescription for phenobarbital from your veterinarian every 6 months.

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
May see tiredness or anxiety and agitation when beginning treatment. This usually is short-term. Contact your veterinarian if these effects do no get better with time.

May see depression, sedation, staggering or an increase in drinking, urinating, and eating.

Infrequently seen are liver damage, which may cause jaundice (yellowing of the gums, skin, or eyes); anemia, with weakness and pale gums; or low platelets, with an increased tendency to bruise or bleed.

If you observe any of the above signs in your pet, contact your veterinarian.

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
Do not use in animals who are hypersensitive (allergic) to phenobarbital or other barbiturates.

Use with extreme caution in animals who have liver disease. Use with caution in animals who are dehydrated or anemic, or who have heart or lung disease, kidney disease, or Addison’s disease (hypoadrenocorticism).

Addiction is possible with long-term use.

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

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

Drug, Food and Test Interactions
Consult your veterinarian before using phenobarbital with any other medications, including vitamins and supplements, since interactions may occur.

Interactions may occur with central nervous system (CNS) depressants (such as narcotics, antihistamines, valproic acid, phenytoin, chloramphenicol, furosemide, oral anticoagulants (blood thinners, warfarin), corticosteroids (e.g., prednisone, dexamethasone), doxycycline, beta-blockers (propranolol), quinidine, theophylline, metronidazole, and NSAIDs (e.g., aspirin, carprofen (Rimadyl, Novox), firocoxib (Previcox), etodolac (EtoGesic), deracoxib (DeraMaxx), tepoxalin (Zubrin), and meloxicam (Metacam).

Blood tests are used to monitor the level of the drug in the blood. It may take a week for the level of the drug in the blood to stabilize after a dose change. Blood samples should be taken as close to normal time of administration as possible – up to two hours before or two hours after.

In a chemistry panel, phenobarbital may cause an increase in liver enzymes. Phenobarbital may also affect the results of thyroid testing.

Signs of Toxicity/Overdose
May see staggering, nystagmus (eyes wiggle back and forth), loss of appetite, vomiting, depression, jaundice (e.g., yellow gums, skin, eyes), sedation, decreased breathing and heart rates, and coma.

Large overdoses can cause 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.