

PHENYTOIN

fen-ih-toe-in

What does it do?

Phenytoin is used to treat and prevent seizures.

How should you take it?

Take *phenytoin* regularly as directed with a glass of water.

Phenytoin Infatabs® may be chewed.

Measure *phenytoin* liquid carefully with an oral syringe or measuring spoon. Shake the bottle well before measuring each dose.

What if you forget a dose?

Take the missed dose as soon as possible and continue as directed.

Can you take other medicines?

Phenytoin can react with many medicines, sometimes with severe results.

Tell your pharmacist or doctor about all medicines or treatments that you may be taking including vitamins, herbal products or recreational drugs.

What side effects might you notice?

Side Effects	Recommended action
Skin rash, skin peeling or blisters	Stop taking and see your doctor immediately
Suicidal thoughts Increased risk of infection - symptoms may include: fever, chills, sore throat, aches and pains, tiredness, pain when peeing, mouth ulcers Easy/unusual bruising or bleeding Symptoms of liver problems including: yellow skin or eyes, itching, dark urine, pale bowel motions, abdominal pain	Tell your doctor immediately
Agitation, confusion, loss of co-ordination/walking or handwriting problems, mood changes, slurred speech, trouble concentrating, unusual behaviour or thinking Changes in vision Enlarged, tender or bleeding gums Tingling or numbness, tremor	Tell your doctor
Dizziness, drowsiness, headache Body hair changes	Tell your doctor if troublesome
Stomach upset	Take with food

If you notice any other effects, discuss them with your doctor or pharmacist.

Other information:

- Tell your doctor if you have liver or blood problems, diabetes or porphyria.
- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant, planning to become pregnant, or breastfeeding.
- Some contraceptives may not work as well while you are taking *phenytoin*, and for 4 weeks after stopping. Discuss with your doctor or pharmacist.
- Do not take calcium or antacids containing aluminium or magnesium within 2 hours of taking *phenytoin*.
- *Phenytoin* may make you dizzy or sleepy and make it dangerous to drive, operate machinery or do other activities that require you to be alert. Limit alcohol intake because it can increase these effects.
- You may need blood tests from time to time to make sure you are taking the right dose of *phenytoin*.
- Long-term use of *phenytoin* may weaken your bones.
- Do not stop taking *phenytoin* without talking to your doctor first, unless you have a skin rash (see Side Effects).

This leaflet contains important, but not all, information about this medicine.

Prepared by the PILs Committee at Christchurch Hospital, Canterbury District Health Board, New Zealand. December 2017