**Phenobarbital**

**Class:** Anticonvulsant, Barbiturate; Barbiturate

**Indications:** Management of generalized tonic-clonic (grand mal), status epilepticus, and partial seizures; sedative/hypnotic

**Note:** Use to treat insomnia is not recommended (Schutte-Rodin, 2008)

Unlabeled: Prevention and treatment of neonatal hyperbilirubinemia and lowering of bilirubin in chronic cholestasis; neonatal seizures

**Available dosage form in the hospital:** Tablet, Oral: 15 mg, 30 mg, 60 mg, 100 mg.

Solution, Oral: 200 mg/mL

Solution, Injection, as sodium: 30 mg/mL, 40 mg/mL.

**Dosage:**

- **Sedation:** Oral, I.M.: 30-120 mg/day in 2-3 divided doses

- **Preoperative sedation:** I.M.: 100-200 mg 1-1.5 hours before procedure

- **Anticonvulsant/status epilepticus:**
  - **Loading dose:** I.V.: 10-20 mg/kg (maximum rate ≤60 mg/minute in patients ≥60 kg); may repeat dose in 20-minute intervals as needed (maximum total dose: 30 mg/kg)
  - **Maintenance dose:** Oral, I.V.: 1-3 mg/kg/day in divided doses or 50-100 mg 2-3 times/day

- **Sedative/hypnotic withdrawal (unlabeled use):** Initial daily requirement is determined by substituting phenobarbital 30 mg for every 100 mg pentobarbital used during tolerance testing; then daily requirement is decreased by 10% of initial dose.

**Geriatric**
Geriatric patients should be started at the lowest recommended dose. Refer to adult dosing.

**Renal Impairment:**
Cl\text{cr} < 10 mL/minute: Administer every 12-16 hours.

Moderately dialyzable (20% to 50%)

**Hepatic Impairment:**
Reduce dose in patients with hepatic impairment
**Common side effects:** Cardiovascular: Bradycardia, hypotension, syncope

Central nervous system: Agitation, anxiety, ataxia, CNS excitation or depression, confusion, dizziness, drowsiness, hallucinations, “hangover” effect, headache, hyperkinesia, impaired judgment, insomnia, lethargy, nervousness, nightmares, somnolence

Dermatologic: Exfoliative dermatitis, rash, Stevens-Johnson syndrome

Gastrointestinal: Nausea, vomiting, constipation

Hematologic: Agranulocytosis, thrombocytopenia, megaloblastic anemia

Local: Pain at injection site, thrombophlebitis with I.V. use

Renal: Oliguria

Respiratory: Laryngospasm, respiratory depression, apnea (especially with rapid I.V. use), hypoventilation

Miscellaneous: Gangrene with inadvertent intra-arterial injection

**Pregnancy Risk Factor:** B/D (manufacturer dependent)