

# MELBOURNE NEUROSURGERY

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## DILANTIN

### WHAT IS THE DRUGS GENERIC(PHARMACISTS) NAME ?

Phenytoin

### WHAT IS THE DRUG USED FOR ?

The treatment of epilepsy(seizures). Abnormal heart rythmn.  
Treatment of some pain syndromes.

### HOW DOES THE DRUG WORK ?

The primary action in the treatment of epilepsy is to prevent the spread of seizure activity in the motor part of the brain. It does this by stabilising the cell wall of the neuron.

### HOW LONG BEFORE IT WORKS ?

This depends on lots of factors but the drug does not reach a stable concentration in the body till about one week



### HOW DO WE KNOW THAT YOU ARE GETTING ENOUGH ?

We will do blood levels on a regular basis to check that you are getting enough and not too much. The first level is usually done at about one week.

### CAN I CHANGE MY DOSE ?

This may be possible but you should not change your dose unless instructed by your doctor or if you develop a possible side effect. In which case you should immediatley stop the medication while contacting your doctor. Stopping abruptly can cause a seizure.

### WHAT ARE THE TABLET STRENGTHS AND WHAT SHOULD MY TABLETS LOOK LIKE ?

30 mg      white capsule        
100 mg      orange and white capsule      

### HOW MUCH/HOW LONG AND WHEN DO I TAKE IT?

This is decided by your doctor but you are usually started on 300mg a day divided into 2-3 doses with a glass of water or after food. After your blood level the dose may be changed. If you run out of tablets this does not mean that you should stop so check with your doctor.

### WHAT DRUGS INTERACT WITH DILANTIN ?

There are many drugs that can increase or decrease the blood levels, once you are stable if you change any medication you should check with your pharmacist and you may need to recheck your dilantin levels.

THIS LEAFLET IS AIMED AT PROVIDING SOME INFORMATION ABOUT THE DRUG PRESCRIBED BY YOUR DOCTOR. THIS MAY NOT PROVIDE THE LATEST INFORMATION AS DRUG INFORMATION IS CONSTANTLY CHANGING. IT AIMS TO PROVIDE ANSWERS TO THE MORE COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS.

### WHAT SHOULD I TELL THE DOCTOR BEFORE I TAKE THIS NEW MEDICATION ?

If you have had a reaction to this drug in the past.  
If you are pregnant(or breast feeding) or planning a pregnancy.  
Any medical conditions especially

kidney disease	Low blood pressure
heart Failure	Porphyria
liver disease	

### WHAT ARE SOME OF THE SIDE EFFECTS

Allergic symptoms of breathlessness or rash.  
Severe skin reaction.  
Thickening of the gums  
Coarsening of facial features  
Liver damage(and abnormal liver tests)  
Osteomalacia  
Overdose

Slurred speach	Drowsiness
Difficulty walking	Nausea/vomiting
Confusion	Visual problems

### WHAT DO I DO IF I THINK I HAVE A SIDE EFFECT

As a general rule contact your doctor immediately and do not take any medication while waiting. Some side effects are life threatening and if any of the below occur it is important to present to a hospital emergency immediately  
Asthma/sudden shortness of breath or difficulty breathing.  
Severe rash  
Swelling of face /lips/hands/throat.  
Chest pain  
Any of the overdose symptoms

**ALL DRUGS HAVE RISKS AND BENEFITS IF YOU HAVE ANY CONCERNS ABOUT TAKING ANY MEDICATION DISCUSS THIS WITH YOUR DOCTOR.**



IT IS IMPORTANT TO CHECK WITH YOUR PHARMACIST ABOUT THE DRUGS YOU ARE TAKING AND ANY AFFECTS THAT IT MAY HAVE ON OTHER DRUGS THAT YOU ARE TAKING AND ALSO THE EFFECTS OTHER DRUGS WILL HAVE ON YOUR NEW DRUGS.