

Pentobarbital (Nembutal Sodium)

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

Generic Name

Pentobarbital

Brand Name

Nembutal Sodium

Type of Drug

Barbiturate and antiseizure medication

Form and Storage

Injectable, capsule, elixir, and rectal suppository

The suppositories should be refrigerated. The other forms should be stored at room temperature unless otherwise indicated by the manufacturer.

Indications for Use

Used for short-term control of status epilepticus, [cluster seizures](#) (multiple seizures in a short amount of time) in dogs. Also used for similar [seizures in cats](#).

General Information

FDA approved for use in veterinary medicine. Class II controlled medication used in a hospital setting. It is used to treat seizures that need longer control than diazepam (Valium) offers, and faster control than phenobarbital offers.

Usual Dose and Administration

Used in hospital setting. Given by injection into a vein to effect (given in small amounts until seizures stop).

Side Effects

Decreased rate of breathing and loss of body temperature. May see excitement in dogs recovering from its sedative effects.

Contraindications/Warnings

Do not use in patients who are hypersensitive (allergic) to barbiturates.

Not for use in patients who are dehydrated, anemic, or who have Addison's disease, heart or lung disease.

Do not use in patients with kidney or liver disease.

MUST be given SLOWLY due to respiratory depressant effect.

Do NOT use to treat lidocaine intoxication (toxicity from lidocaine, a medication used for anesthesia and to treat certain heart problems).

Not for use in pregnant or nursing animals.

Drug or Food Interactions

Pentobarbital's effect may be increased if used with phenobarbital or other central nervous system (CNS) depressants, valproic acid, or chloramphenicol.

May decrease the effect of oral anticoagulants, corticosteroids, beta blockers, quinidine, theophylline, or metronidazole.

Increased risk of low blood pressure if used with furosemide (Lasix).

May change the metabolism of phenytoin.

Deaths have occurred when used to treat lidocaine induced seizures.

No known food interactions.

Overdose/Toxicity

May see sedation, coma, decreased rate of breathing, and death.

Summary

Pentobarbital is used to treat serious seizures in cats and dogs in a hospital setting.