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.