benzonatate (ben-zoe-na-tate)

**Toxin**

**Classification**
Therapeutic: allergy, cold, and cough remedies, antitussives (local anesthetic)

**Pregnancy Category C**

**Indications**
Relief of nonproductive cough due to minor throat or bronchial irritation from inhaled irritants or colds.

**Action**
Anesthetizes cough or stretch receptors in vagal afferent fibers found in lungs, pharynx, and respiratory passages. May also decrease transmission of the cough reflex centrally. Therapeutic Effects: Decrease in cough.

**Pharmacokinetics**
Absorption: Unknown.
Distribution: Unknown.
Metabolism and Excretion: Unknown.
Half-life: Unknown.

**TIME/ACTION PROFILE (antitussive effect)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ROUTE</th>
<th>ONSET</th>
<th>PEAK</th>
<th>DURATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PO</td>
<td>15–20 min</td>
<td>unknown</td>
<td>3–8 hr</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Contraindications/Precautions**
Contraindicated in: Hypersensitivity to benzonatate. Cross-sensitivity with other ester-type local anesthetics (tetracaine, procaine, and others) may occur.

Use Cautiously in:
- OB: Safety not established; Lactation: Safety not established in children < 10 yr.

**Adverse Reactions/Side Effects**

- = Goal response
- = Generic implication
- = Life-threatening
- = Discontinued

**Interactions**
Drug-Drug: Additive CNS depression may occur with antihistamines, alcohol, opioids, and sedative/hypnotics.

**Route/Dosage**
PO (Adults and Children ≥10 yr): 100 mg 3 times daily (up to 600 mg/day).

**NURSING IMPLICATIONS**

**Assessment**
- Assess frequency and nature of cough, lung sounds, and amount and type of sputum.
- Monitor fluid intake of 1500–2000 mL to decrease viscosity of bronchial secretions.

**Potential Nursing Diagnoses**
- Ineffective airway clearance (Indications)

**Implementation**
- Capsules should be swallowed whole. Do not chew, because release of benzonatate from capsules may cause local anesthetic effect and choking.
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**Patient/Family Teaching**
- Instruct patient to take exactly as directed. If a dose is missed, take as soon as possible unless almost time for next dose. Do not double doses.
- Caution patient not to chew capsules.
- Advise parents to keep benzonatate in a child-resistant container and store it out of reach of children. Overdose with benzonatate in children less than 2 years of age has been reported following accidental ingestion of as few as 1 or 2 capsules. If a child accidentally ingests benzonatate, seek medical attention immediately.
- Instruct patient to take capsule(s) efficiently. Sit upright and take several deep breaths before attempting to cough.
- Advise patient to minimize cough by avoiding irritants, such as cigarette smoke, fumes, and dust. Humidification of environmental air, frequent sips of water, and sugarless hard candy may also decrease the frequency of dry, irritating cough.
- Caution patient to avoid alcohol and other CNS depressants concurrently with this medication.
- May occasionally cause dizziness or drowsiness. Caution patient to avoid driving or other activities requiring alertness until response to the medication is known.
Advise patient that any cough lasting more than 1 wk or accompanied by fever, chest pain, persistent headache, or skin rash warrants medical attention.

Advise patient to notify health care professional if symptoms of overdose (seizures, restlessness, trembling) occur.

Evaluation/Desired Outcomes

Decrease in frequency and intensity of cough without eliminating patient's cough reflex.

Why was this drug prescribed for your patient?