



Section: Drug Reference
Subject: AMYL NITRITE
Section #: 348.04
Issue Date: March 21, 2011
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Amyl Nitrite

1. CLASSIFICATION
 - a. Vasodilator related to nitroglycerin.
2. ACTIONS / DESCRIPTIONS
 - a. Induces the formation of methemoglobin. Thus changes the iron (Fe^{+2}) in the blood to (Fe^{+3}). In cases of cyanide poisoning, the methemoglobin combines with the cyanide to form non-toxic cyanmethemoglobin.
 - b. The vapors are absorbed rapidly through the alveoli causing effects within one minute after inhalation.
 - c. Rapid acting vasodilator administered by inhalation.
 - d. Causes a non-specific relaxation of smooth muscle primarily vascular smooth muscle.
 - e. Causes coronary vasodilation, decreased systemic vascular resistance, and decreased left ventricle preload and afterload.
3. INDICATIONS
 - a. Cyanide poisoning in the conscious patient
 - b. Cyanide poisoning without complications from carbon monoxide poisoning
4. CONTRAINDICATIONS
 - a. Glaucoma: acute narrow angle
 - b. Recent head trauma or cerebral hemorrhage due to increases in intraocular and intracranial pressures
5. PRECAUTIONS
 - a. Glaucoma
 - b. Hypotension
6. ADVERSE REACTIONS
 - a. Dizziness
 - b. Blushing of the face
 - c. Syncope
 - d. Hypotension
 - e. Tachycardia
 - f. Restlessness
 - g. Weakness
 - h. Methemoglobinemia in high doses
 - i. Cold sweats
 - j. Muscle twitching
7. DOSAGE
 - a. Inhalations for up to 30 seconds. Inhale for 15 seconds then stop for 15 seconds.
 - b. Every two (2) minutes use a fresh capsule.
 - c. Once an IV has been established, give sodium nitrite and discontinue amyl nitrite.

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8. DRUG ACTION TIME
 - a. Effects begin within one (1) minute of inhalation.
9. INFORMATIONAL POINTS
 - a. Keep the patient sitting or lying during drug administration.
 - b. Methylene blue is the antidote for severe methemoglobinemia.
 - c. Do not give if elevated HbCO level in the blood has not been corrected.