

Bismuth Subsalicylate (Pepto-Bismol)

Indication(s): Gastroenteritis (Traveller's Diarrhea Prophylaxis)

Contraindications: Hypersensitivity to bismuth subsalicylate or salicylates (incl. ASA). History of severe or active gastrointestinal bleeding. History of coagulopathy. 2nd half of pregnancy.

Precautions: Use with caution during breastfeeding. Elderly patients are more likely to have age-related renal dysfunction which may increase their risk of adverse effects - dosage reduction may be required to prevent accumulation of the medication in this demographic.

Drug Interactions: May decrease the hypotensive effects of Angiotensin Converting Enzyme Inhibitors (ACEIs), Angiotensin Receptor Binders (ARBs) and β Blockers (Monitor). May decrease the absorption of oral tetracycline antibiotics (e.g. doxycycline) (Administer tetracycline 2h before or 6h after bismuth subsalicylate). Avoid use with other salicylates (e.g. ASA) due to increased chance of adverse effects.

Adverse Effects: Transient darkening of the tongue (minimized by rinsing the mouth after ingestion) and black stools (may create diagnostic confusion with melena) are common. Less common: Anxiety; confusion; headache; mental depression; slurred speech; hearing loss; tinnitus.

Pharmacology: Mechanism of action is related to the bismuth component, it firms stools and binds bacterial toxins.

Dosage and Administration: 524mg (2 tabs) or 30mL susp PO QID – Start 1 day before travel and continue until 2 days after leaving the destination.