

SUMMARY of DRUGS USED for DOCTOR-PRESCRIBED SUICIDE

According to Oregon's latest official report, deaths occurred after patients took the following prescribed drugs¹:

Secobarbital (Seconal)	60%
Pentobarbital (Nembutal)	39%
Other	1%

Secobarbital (Seconal) and Pentobarbital (Nembutal) are barbiturates, sedatives.

The usual therapeutic dosage for each is:

Secobarbital:

Oral: 100-200 mg.
I.V.: 50-250 mg.
Preoperative sedation: 200-300 mg.

Pentobarbital:

Oral: 100-200 mg.
I.V.: 100-200 mg.
Rectal: 120-200 mg.
Preoperative sedation: 150-200 mg.

The usual doctor-prescribed suicide dose² for each is:

Secobarbital: 9 grams (9000 mg.)
In capsule form. Capsules opened and contents mixed with sweet substance to mask the taste.

Pentobarbital: 10 grams (10,000 mg.)
In liquid form. Mixed with sweet liquid to mask the taste.

Although oral self-administration is generally thought to be the only route of administration, there are reported cases of using a syringe to administer the lethal dose.³

Cost of drugs for doctor-prescribed suicide:

Pentobarbital has become extremely difficult to obtain since manufacturers are refusing to supply it because it is used for lethal injections in capital punishment. Secobarbital is increasingly used but costs \$1,500 to \$2,300 for a lethal amount (more than five times the price of pentobarbital).⁴

¹ <http://public.health.oregon.gov/ProviderPartnerResources/EvaluationResearch/DeathwithDignityAct/Documents/year17.pdf>, p. 5 and p. 6, n.8.

² Jennifer Fass and Andrea Fass, "Physician-assisted Suicide: Ongoing Challenges for Pharmacists," *Am. J. Health Syst Pharm.* 2011;68(9): 846-849. Available at: http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/742070_print (last accessed 5/5/15).

³ Molly Harbarger, "Legislator's promise to a dying friend," *Oregonian*, April 30, 2015. Available at: http://www.oregonlive.com/politics/index.ssf/2015/04/legislators_promise_to_a_dying.html (last accessed 5/5/15).

⁴ Nigel Jaquiss, "Penalized By The Death Penalty," *Willamette Week*, May 21, 2014. Available at: http://www.wweek.com/portland/article-22574-penalized_by_the_death_penalty.html (last accessed 5/5/15).