



Drug

Antabuse

disulfiram

Patient Education - English

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Generic Name: disulfiram

Pronounced: dye SUL fi ram

Brand Name: Antabuse

What is the most important information I should know about disulfiram?



You should not use disulfiram if you have recently taken metronidazole or paraldehyde, or if you have consumed any foods or products that contain alcohol (mouthwash, cough medicine, cooking wine or vinegar, certain desserts, and others).



Do not take disulfiram if you have consumed alcohol within the past 12 hours. Do not drink alcohol while taking disulfiram, and for up to 14 days after you stop taking this medicine.

Disulfiram should never be given to a person without his or her knowledge of taking the medicine.

What is disulfiram?

Disulfiram blocks an enzyme that is involved in metabolizing alcohol intake. Disulfiram produces very unpleasant side effects when combined with alcohol in the body.

Disulfiram is used in certain people with chronic alcoholism. This medicine can help keep you from drinking because of the unpleasant side effects that will occur if you consume alcohol while taking disulfiram.

Disulfiram is used together with behavior modification, psychotherapy, and counseling support to help you stop drinking. This medicine is *not a cure* for alcoholism.

Disulfiram may also be used for purposes not listed in this medication guide.

What should I discuss with my healthcare provider before taking disulfiram?



Do not take disulfiram if you have consumed alcohol within the past 12 hours. *Do not drink alcohol* while taking disulfiram and for up to 14 days after you stop taking this medicine.



You should not use disulfiram if you are allergic to it, or if:

you have recently taken metronidazole (Flagyl) or paraldehyde; or

you have consumed any foods or products that contain alcohol (mouthwash, cough medicine, cooking wine or vinegar, certain desserts, and others).

To make sure disulfiram is safe for you, tell your doctor if you have:

liver or kidney disease;

heart disease, high blood pressure, history of heart attack or stroke;

underactive thyroid;

diabetes;

seizures or epilepsy;

head injury or brain damage;

a history of mental illness or psychosis;

an allergy to rubber; or

if you take phenytoin (Dilantin), tuberculosis medicine, or a blood thinner (warfarin, Coumadin, Jantoven).



FDA pregnancy category C. It is not known whether disulfiram will harm an unborn baby. Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant while using this medicine.



It is not known whether disulfiram passes into breast milk or if it could harm a nursing baby. You should not breast-feed while using this medicine.



Do not give this medicine to anyone under 18 years old without medical advice.

How should I take disulfiram?

Follow all directions on your prescription label. Your doctor may occasionally change your dose to make sure you get the best results. Do not take this medicine in larger or smaller amounts or for longer than recommended.

You will need frequent blood tests to check your liver function.



Wear a medical alert tag or carry an ID card stating that you take disulfiram. Any medical care provider who treats you should know that you are using disulfiram.

When disulfiram is used as part of a treatment program for alcohol addiction or detoxification, your doctor may recommend that this medicine be given to you by a family member or other caregiver. This is to make sure you are using the medicine as it was prescribed as part of your treatment.

Additional forms of counseling and/or monitoring may be recommended during treatment with disulfiram.

For best results, *keep using this medicine as directed*. Disulfiram is sometimes given for up to several months or years.



Store at room temperature away from moisture, heat, and light.

What happens if I miss a dose?

Take the missed dose as soon as you remember. Take the rest of the day's doses at evenly spaced intervals unless otherwise directed by your doctor.

What happens if I overdose?



Seek emergency medical attention or call the Poison Help line at 1-800-222-1222.

What should I avoid while taking disulfiram?



Do not drink alcohol while taking disulfiram. Avoid situations that might tempt you to drink.

Be aware that *many common products contain small amounts of alcohol*, enough to cause a disulfiram reaction. Such products include aftershave, cologne, perfume, antiperspirant, mouthwash, antiseptic astringent skin products, hair dyes, and others. Check the label to see if any food or medicine product contains alcohol. Ask your pharmacist if you have questions.

Avoid coming into contact with *non-consumable products that may contain alcohol*: paint thinners, solvents, stains, lacquers and others.

Avoid coming into contact with or breathing the fumes of pesticides or chemicals used in manufacturing or certain other industries (waxes, dyes, resins, and gums).

What are the possible side effects of disulfiram?



Get emergency medical help if you have any of these *signs of an allergic reaction*: hives; difficult breathing; swelling of your face, lips, tongue, or throat.

Even small amounts of alcohol can produce unpleasant symptoms while disulfiram is in your body. These symptoms include:

- flushing (warmth, redness, or tingly feeling);
- sweating, increased thirst, swelling, rapid weight gain;
- nausea, severe vomiting;
- neck pain, throbbing headache, blurred vision;
- chest pain, shortness of breath (even with mild exertion);
- fast or pounding heartbeats or fluttering in your chest;
- confusion, weakness, spinning sensation, feeling unsteady; or
- a light-headed feeling, like you might pass out.



More severe symptoms may occur when disulfiram and large amounts of alcohol are used together, such as severe chest pain spreading to your jaw or shoulder, slow heart rate, weak pulse, seizure, fainting, weak or shallow breathing, or slow breathing (breathing may stop). *A disulfiram-alcohol reaction can be fatal.*



Call your doctor at once if you have:

- eye pain or sudden vision loss;
- confusion, unusual thoughts or behavior; or
- liver problems--nausea, upper stomach pain, itching, tired feeling, loss of appetite, dark urine, clay-colored stools, jaundice (yellowing of the skin or eyes).

Common side effects may include:

- skin rash, acne;
- mild headache, tired feeling;
- impotence, loss of interest in sex; or

metallic or garlic-like taste in the mouth.

This is not a complete list of side effects and others may occur. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

What other drugs will affect disulfiram?

Other drugs may interact with disulfiram, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal products. Tell each of your health care providers about all medicines you use now and any medicine you start or stop using.

Where can I get more information?

Your pharmacist can provide more information about disulfiram.

Remember, keep this and all other medicines out of the reach of children, never share your medicines with others, and use this medication only for the indication prescribed.

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