PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Dronabinol

This information from UpToDate® Lexidrug™ explains what you need to know about this medication, including what it's used for, how to take it, its side effects, and when to call your healthcare provider.

Brand Names: US

Marinol; Syndros

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat upset stomach and throwing up caused by chemotherapy.
- It is used to treat loss of appetite with weight loss in people who have AIDS.

What do I need to tell the doctor BEFORE my child takes this drug?

All products:

- If your child is allergic to this drug; any part of this drug; or any other drugs, foods, or substances. Tell the doctor about the allergy and what signs your child had.
- If your child has ever had alcohol or drug use disorder.
- If your child has ever had any mental health or behavior problems.
- If your child takes any drugs (prescription or OTC, natural products, vitamins) that must not be taken with this drug like certain cough or cold remedies, diet pills, drugs for mental or mood problems, or stimulants like amphetamine. There are many drugs that must not be taken with this drug.
- If your child is pregnant or may be pregnant. Do not give this drug to your child during pregnancy.

- If your child is breast-feeding a baby or plans to breast-feed a baby. Your child may need to avoid breast-feeding. If the doctor says your child can breast-feed a baby, the baby will need regular weight checks.

Capsules:

- If your child has an allergy to sesame oil.

Liquid (solution):

- If your child has an allergy to alcohol or your child has taken disulfiram or metronidazole within the past 2 weeks. Taking this drug within 2 weeks after taking disulfiram or metronidazole may cause cramps, upset stomach or throwing up, headaches, and flushing.
- If your child has a feeding tube. This drug is not for use with some types of feeding tubes.
- If your child is a premature newborn. This drug is not for use in certain ages of premature newborns.

This is not a list of all drugs or health problems that interact with this drug.

Tell the doctor and pharmacist about all of your child's drugs (prescription or OTC, natural products, vitamins) and health problems. You must check to make sure that it is safe to give this drug with all of your child's other drugs and health problems. Do not start, stop, or change the dose of any drug your child takes without checking with the doctor.

What are some things I need to know or do while my child takes this drug?

All products:

- Tell all of your child's health care providers that your child is taking this drug. This includes your child's doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- Have your child avoid tasks or actions that call for alertness until you see how this drug affects your child. These are things like riding a bike, playing sports, or using items such as scissors, lawnmowers, electric scooters, toy

cars, or motorized vehicles.

- To lower the chance of feeling dizzy or passing out, have your child rise slowly if your child has been sitting or lying down. Have your child be careful going up and down stairs.
- High or low blood pressure can happen after this drug is started or after the dose is raised. Changes in blood pressure may raise the chance of falling. Older people and people with heart problems may have a higher chance of changes in blood pressure and falling. Talk with the doctor.
- Check blood pressure and heart rate as the doctor has told you.
- Alcohol may interact with this drug. Be sure your child does not drink alcohol.
- Be sure your child does not smoke marijuana while taking this drug. Talk with the doctor.
- Talk with your child's doctor before your child uses marijuana, other forms of cannabis, or prescription or OTC drugs that may slow your child's actions.
- If your child drinks grapefruit juice or eats grapefruit often, talk with your child's doctor.
- This drug may cause mood changes when your child starts taking it. Be sure there is someone you can trust to help your child if needed when your child takes this drug.
- This drug may be habit-forming with long-term use.
- If you stop giving this drug to your child all of a sudden, your child may have signs of withdrawal. Tell the doctor if your child has any bad effects.
- If this drug is taken by accident, get medical help right away.
- This drug is not approved for use in children. However, the doctor may decide the benefits of taking this drug outweigh the risks. If your child has been given this drug, ask the doctor for information about the benefits and risks. Talk with the doctor if you have questions about giving this drug to your child.

If your child is pregnant:

- This drug may cause harm to the unborn baby if your child takes it during pregnancy. If your child is pregnant or gets pregnant while taking this drug, call the doctor right away.

Liquid (solution):

- Do not give disulfiram or metronidazole to your child within 7 days after your child's last dose of this drug.
- This drug has alcohol and propylene glycol in it. Preterm newborns may have a higher chance of very bad and sometimes deadly side effects caused by propylene glycol. If you have questions, talk with the doctor or pharmacist.

What are some side effects that I need to call my child's doctor about right away?

WARNING/CAUTION: Even though it may be rare, some people may have very bad and sometimes deadly side effects when taking a drug. Tell your child's doctor or get medical help right away if your child has any of the following signs or symptoms that may be related to a very bad side effect:

- Signs of an allergic reaction, like rash; hives; itching; red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin with or without fever; wheezing; tightness in the chest or throat; trouble breathing, swallowing, or talking; unusual hoarseness; or swelling of the mouth, face, lips, tongue, or throat.
- Signs of high or low blood pressure like very bad headache or dizziness, passing out, or change in eyesight.
- Mental, mood, or behavior changes that are new or worse.
- Hallucinations (seeing or hearing things that are not there).
- A fast heartbeat.
- Memory problems or loss.
- Not able to focus.
- Change in balance.

- Feeling confused.
- Seizures.
- Stomach pain, upset stomach, or throwing up that is new or worse.
- Mouth sores.
- Burning.
- Flushing.

What are some other side effects of this drug?

All drugs may cause side effects. However, many people have no side effects or only have minor side effects. Call your child's doctor or get medical help if any of these side effects or any other side effects bother your child or do not go away:

- Feeling dizzy or sleepy.
- Feeling high (easy laughing and feeling good).

These are not all of the side effects that may occur. If you have questions about side effects, call your child's doctor. Call your child's doctor for medical advice about side effects.

You may report side effects to your national health agency.

How is this drug best given?

Give this drug as ordered by your child's doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

All products:

- If your child is using this drug to treat loss of appetite, give this drug 1 hour before lunch and dinner unless the doctor has told you to give it some other way.
- If your child is using this drug to treat upset stomach and throwing up caused by chemotherapy, follow what your child's doctor has told you to do about giving this drug with or without food.

Liquid (solution):

- This drug comes wrapped in plastic. If this drug is not wrapped in plastic when you get it, call your pharmacist.
- Only use the measuring device that comes with this drug.
- Give this drug with a full glass of water.
- Those who have feeding tubes may use this drug. Use as you have been told. Flush the feeding tube after this drug is given.

What do I do if my child misses a dose?

- Give a missed dose as soon as you think about it.
- If it is close to the time for your child's next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your child's normal time.
- Do not give 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.

How do I store and/or throw out this drug?

Capsules:

- Store in a cool place below 59°F (15°C) or in a refrigerator. Do not freeze.

Liquid (solution):

- Store unopened bottles in the refrigerator. Do not freeze.
- After opening, store at room temperature or in a refrigerator. Throw away any part not used after 6 weeks.

All products:

- Keep lid tightly closed.
- Store in a dry place. Do not store in a bathroom.
- Store this drug in a safe place where children cannot see or reach it, and where other people cannot get to it. A locked box or area may help keep this drug safe. Keep all drugs away from pets.

- Throw away unused or expired drugs. Do not flush down a toilet or pour down a drain unless you are told to do so. Check with your pharmacist if you have questions about the best way to throw out drugs. There may be drug take-back programs in your area.

General drug facts

- If your child's symptoms or health problems do not get better or if they become worse, call your child's doctor.
- Do not share your child's drug with others and do not give anyone else's drug to your child.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your child's doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
- If you think there has been an overdose, call your poison control center or get medical care right away. Be ready to tell or show what was taken, how much, and when it happened.

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If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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