Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Dronabinol

This information from Lexicomp® 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 help you eat more.
- It is used to treat upset stomach and throwing up.

What do I need to tell my doctor BEFORE I take this drug?

All products:

- If you are allergic to this drug; any part of this drug; or any other drugs, foods, or substances. Tell your doctor about the allergy and what signs you had.
- If you are addicted to drugs or alcohol, or have been in the past.
- If you have ever had any mental health or behavior

problems.

- If you take 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 you are pregnant or may be pregnant. Do not take this drug if you are pregnant.
- If you are breast-feeding or plan to breast-feed. You may need to avoid breast-feeding. If your doctor says that you can breast-feed, your baby will need regular weight checks.

Capsules:

- If you have an allergy to sesame oil.

Liquid (solution):

- If you have an allergy to alcohol or you have 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 you have a feeding tube. This drug is not for use with some types of feeding tubes.

Children:

- 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 your doctor and pharmacist about all of your drugs (prescription or OTC, natural products, vitamins) and health problems. You must check to make sure that it is safe for you to take this drug with all of your drugs and health problems. Do not start, stop, or change the dose of any drug without checking with your doctor.

What are some things I need to know or do while I take this drug?
All products:

- Tell all of your health care providers that you take this drug. This includes your doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- Avoid driving and doing other tasks or actions that call for you to be alert until you see how this drug affects you.
- To lower the chance of feeling dizzy or passing out, rise slowly if you have been sitting or lying down. 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.
- Avoid drinking alcohol while taking this drug.
- Do not smoke or use other forms of cannabis (marijuana) while taking this drug. Talk with your doctor.
- Talk with your doctor before you use marijuana, other forms of cannabis, or prescription or OTC drugs that may slow your actions.
- If you drink grapefruit juice or eat grapefruit often, talk with your doctor.
- This drug may cause mood changes when you start taking it. Be sure there is someone you can trust to help you if needed when you take this drug.
- This drug may be habit-forming with long-term use.
- If you stop taking this drug all of a sudden, you may have signs of withdrawal. Tell your doctor if you have 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 you are 65 or older, use this drug with care. You could have more side effects.
- This drug may cause harm to the unborn baby if you take it while you are pregnant. If you are pregnant or you get pregnant while taking this drug, call your doctor right away.

Liquid (solution):

- Do not take disulfiram or metronidazole within 7 days after your 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 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 doctor or get medical help right away if you have 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 doctor or get medical help if any of these side effects or any other side effects bother you 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 doctor. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects.

You may report side effects to your national health agency.

You may report side effects to the FDA at 1-800-332-1088. You may also report side effects at https://www.fda.gov/medwatch.

How is this drug best taken?

Use this drug as ordered by your doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

All products:

- If you are using this drug to help you eat more, take this drug 1 hour before lunch and dinner or as your doctor has told you.
- If you are using this drug to treat upset stomach and throwing up, follow what your doctor has told you to do about taking 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.
- Take 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 I miss a dose?

- Take a missed dose as soon as you think about it.
- If it is close to the time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your normal time.
- Do not take 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 symptoms or health problems do not get better or if they become worse, call your doctor.
- Do not share your drugs with others and do not take anyone else’s drugs.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. Check with your pharmacist. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your 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.

Consumer Information Use and Disclaimer

This generalized information is a limited summary of diagnosis, treatment, and/or medication information. It is not meant to be comprehensive and should be used as a tool to help the user understand and/or assess potential diagnostic and treatment options. It does NOT include all information about conditions, treatments, medications, side effects, or risks that may apply to a specific patient. It is not intended to be medical advice or a substitute for the medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment of a health care provider based on the health care provider's examination and assessment of a patient's specific and unique circumstances. Patients must speak with a health care provider for complete information about their health, medical questions, and treatment options, including any risks or benefits regarding use of medications. This information does not endorse any treatments or medications as safe, effective, or approved for treating a specific patient. UpToDate, Inc. and its affiliates disclaim any warranty or liability relating to this information or the use thereof. The use of this information is governed by the Terms of Use, available at https://www.wolterskluwer.com/en/know/clinical-

effectiveness-terms.

Last Reviewed Date

2023-02-06

Copyright

© 2024 UpToDate, Inc. and its affiliates and/or licensors. All rights reserved.

If you have any questions, contact a member of your care team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5 p.m., during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

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

Dronabinol - Last updated on December 12, 2022
All rights owned and reserved by Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center