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Marinol

Generic name: [dronabinol](#) [*droe-NAH-bih-nol*]

Brand names: Marinol, [Syndros](#)

Drug class: [Miscellaneous antiemetics](#)

Medically reviewed by [Sanjai Sinha, MD](#). Last updated on Jul 10, 2024.

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What is Marinol?

Marinol is a man-made form of cannabis (also known as marijuana).

Marinol is used to treat loss of appetite that causes weight loss in people with [AIDS](#).

Marinol is also used to treat severe [nausea and vomiting](#) caused by cancer chemotherapy. It is usually given after medicines to control nausea and vomiting have been tried without success.

Warnings

Marinol may cause new or worsening psychosis (unusual thoughts or behavior), especially if you have ever had depression or mental illness.

Marinol can raise or lower blood pressure, especially in older adults or in people with heart problems.

Call your doctor at once if you have new or worsening mood symptoms, changes in behavior, headaches, vision problems, rapid heartbeats, or severe dizziness.

Marinol may be habit-forming and should be used only by the person it was prescribed for. It should never be given to another person, especially someone who has a history of drug addiction or habitual marijuana use. Keep the medication in a secure place where others cannot get to it.

Avoid using other medicines that affect the central nervous system (such as stimulants, diet pills, cold medicine, pain medication, muscle relaxers, and medicine for seizures, depression, anxiety, mental illness, or Parkinson's disease). These other drugs can add to the effects of Marinol.

Marinol causes effects that will impair your thinking or reactions. Do not drive or do anything that requires you to be awake and alert until the effects wear off.

Before taking this medicine

You should not use Marinol if you are allergic to dronabinol.

You should not take Marinol **capsules** if you are allergic to sesame oil.

To make sure this medicine is safe for you, tell your doctor if you have ever had:

- an allergy to any medication;
- epilepsy or other seizure disorder;
- heart problems, high or low blood pressure, fainting spells, fast heartbeats;
- alcoholism or drug addiction; or
- depression, mental illness, or psychosis.

Older adults may be more sensitive to the effects of this medicine.

It is not known whether dronabinol will harm an unborn baby. Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant.

HIV can be passed to your baby if you are not properly treated during pregnancy. **If you have HIV or AIDS**, take all of your medicines as directed to control your infection.

Dronabinol can pass into breast milk and may harm a nursing baby. You should not breastfeed while using this medicine, and for at least 9 days after your last dose.

Women with HIV or AIDS should not breastfeed a baby. Even if your baby is born without HIV, the virus may be passed to the baby in your breast milk.

Marinol is not approved for use by anyone younger than 18 years old.

 [Marinol pregnancy and breastfeeding warnings](#) (more detail)

How should I take Marinol?

Take Marinol exactly as it was prescribed for you. Follow all directions on your prescription label. Your doctor may occasionally change your dose. Do not use this medicine in larger or smaller amounts or for longer than recommended.

Dronabinol may be habit-forming. **Never share Marinol with another person, especially someone with a history of drug abuse or addiction.** Keep the medication in a place where others cannot get to it. **Misuse can cause addiction, overdose, or death.** Selling or giving away this medicine is against the law. Tell your doctor if you feel an increased urge to take more or higher doses than prescribed.

Read all patient information, medication guides, and instruction sheets provided to you. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you have any questions.

To stimulate appetite in people with AIDS, Marinol is usually taken 1 hour before lunch and 1 hour before dinner.

To prevent nausea and vomiting caused by chemotherapy:

- Take your **first dose on an empty stomach**, at least 30 minutes before eating.
- After your first dose, you may take Marinol with or without food but take it the same way each time.

- Marinol is usually given 1 to 3 hours before your chemotherapy treatment, and then every 2 to 4 hours (up to 6 doses per day).

To prevent nausea and vomiting, Marinol is usually given 1 to 3 hours before your chemotherapy treatment, and then every 2 to 4 hours (up to 6 doses per day).

Older adults may need to take this medicine less often. **Follow your doctor's dosing instructions very carefully.** Follow your doctor's instructions.

You may need to follow a special diet while using Marinol. Follow all instructions of your doctor or dietitian. Learn about the foods you should eat to help boost your food intake.

Swallow the capsule whole and do not crush, chew, break, or open it.

Call your doctor if your symptoms do not improve, or if they get worse while using Marinol.

Do not stop using this medicine suddenly after long-term use, or you could have unpleasant withdrawal symptoms. Ask your doctor how to safely stop using dronabinol.

Store the **capsules** in a tightly-closed container in the refrigerator. Do not freeze.

You may also store the **capsules** at cool room temperature, away from moisture and heat.

Dosing information

Usual Adult Dose for Nausea/Vomiting -- Chemotherapy Induced:

Initial: 5 mg/m², 1 to 3 hours prior to chemotherapy treatment, then every 2 to 4 hours after chemotherapy for a total of 4 to 6 doses per day.

Usual Adult Dose for Anorexia:

Initial: 2.5 mg orally twice daily, before lunch and supper.

Maximum: 20 mg daily, given in 4 divided doses.

Usual Pediatric Dose for Nausea/Vomiting -- Chemotherapy Induced:

Initial: 5 mg/m², 1 to 3 hours prior to chemotherapy treatment, then every 2 to 4 hours after chemotherapy for a total of 4 to 6 doses per day.

 [Detailed Marinol dosage information](#)

What happens if I miss a dose?

Take the medicine as soon as you can, but skip the missed dose if it is almost time for your next dose. **Do not** take two doses at one time.

What happens if I overdose?

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

Overdose symptoms may include changes in mood, memory problems, little or no urinating, constipation, loss of energy, problems with speech or coordination, or feeling light-headed.

What to avoid

Do not use marijuana while taking Marinol.

Avoid driving or operating machinery until you know how this medicine will affect you. Dizziness or severe drowsiness can cause falls or other accidents.

Do not drink alcohol while taking this medicine.

Marinol side effects

Get emergency medical help if you have **signs of an allergic reaction to Marinol**: hives, skin rash or burning; mouth sores; warmth, redness, or tingly feeling; difficult breathing; swelling of your face, lips, tongue, or throat.

Call your doctor at once if you have:

- a seizure;
- fast or pounding heartbeats;
- a light-headed feeling, like you might pass out;
- confusion, trouble sleeping, problems with memory or concentration;
- unusual changes in mood or behavior;
- restlessness, feeling nervous or irritable;
- slurred speech, drowsiness;
- severe or ongoing nausea, vomiting, or stomach pain; or
- **increased blood pressure** - severe headache, blurred vision, pounding in your neck or ears.

Common Marinol side effects may include:

- feeling "high";
- dizziness, drowsiness, thinking problems;
- unusual thoughts or fears;
- feelings of extreme happiness; or
- nausea, vomiting, stomach pain.

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.

 [Marinol side effects](#) (more detail)

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What other drugs will affect Marinol?

Sometimes it is not safe to use certain medications at the same time. Some drugs can affect your blood levels of other drugs you take, which may increase side effects or make the medications less effective.

Using Marinol with other drugs that make you drowsy can worsen this effect. Ask your doctor before using opioid medication, a sleeping pill, a muscle relaxer, or medicine for anxiety or seizures.

Other drugs may interact with dronabinol, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal products. Tell your doctor about all your current medicines and any medicine you start or stop using.

 [Marinol drug interactions](#) (more detail)

Does Marinol interact with my other drugs?

Enter medications to view a detailed interaction report using our [Drug Interaction Checker](#).

Marinol

+

Enter a drug name

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Patient resources

Other brands

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Professional resources

- [Marinol prescribing information](#)
- [Dronabinol \(AHFS Monograph\)](#)

Other brands

[Syndros](#)

Related treatment guides

- [Anorexia](#)
- [Nausea/Vomiting, Chemotherapy Induced](#)
- [AIDS Related Wasting](#)

Further information

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

Always consult your healthcare provider to ensure the information displayed on this page applies to your personal circumstances.

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DRUG STATUS

Availability

Rx Prescription only

Pregnancy & Lactation

 Risk data available

CSA Schedule*

M Multiple: 2,3



Approval History

10+ years FDA approved 1985



User Reviews & Ratings

8.5 / 10

[29 Reviews](#)

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