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2. Antabuse

Antabuse

Generic name: [disulfiram](#) [dye-SUL-fi-ram]**Drug class:** [Drugs used in alcohol dependence](#)Medically reviewed by [Kaci Durbin, MD](#). Last updated on Aug 20, 2023.[Uses](#) [Warnings](#) [Before taking](#) [Dosage](#) [Side effects](#) [Interactions](#)

What is Antabuse?

Antabuse blocks an enzyme that is involved in processing alcohol. Disulfiram produces very unpleasant side effects (such as fast heartbeat, chest pain, nausea, dizziness, flushing, and thirst) when combined with alcohol in the body.

Antabuse 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 Antabuse.

Antabuse is used together with therapy and counseling support to help you stop drinking. This medicine is not a cure for alcoholism.

Warnings

You should not use Antabuse 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).

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

Before taking this medicine

Do not take Antabuse 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 Antabuse if you are allergic to disulfiram, or if:

- you have recently taken metronidazole (Flagyl) or paraldehyde;
- you have consumed any foods or products that contain alcohol (mouthwash, cough medicine, cooking wine or vinegar, certain desserts, and others).
- you have severe heart disease or blockage in the arteries of your heart; or
- you have been diagnosed with psychosis.

To make sure Antabuse 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;
- mental illness;
- an allergy to rubber; or
- if you take phenytoin (Dilantin), tuberculosis medicine, or a blood thinner (warfarin, Coumadin, Jantoven).

It is not known whether Antabuse 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 Antabuse 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.

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

How should I take Antabuse?

Take Antabuse exactly as directed by your doctor. 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 Antabuse. Any medical care provider who treats you should know that you are using disulfiram.

When Antabuse 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.

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

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

 [Detailed Antabuse dosage information](#)

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 to avoid

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

Be aware that many common products contain small amounts of alcohol, enough to cause a Antabuse 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).

Antabuse side effects

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

Even small amounts of alcohol can produce unpleasant symptoms while Antabuse 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 Antabuse 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;

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

Common Antabuse 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.

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

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What other drugs will affect Antabuse?

Tell your doctor about all medicines you use, and those you start or stop using during your treatment with Antabuse, especially:

- seizure medications such as phenytoin (Dilantin)
- blood thinning medications (including warfarin, Coumadin, Jantoven); or
- isoniazid.

This list is not complete and 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.

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

Does Antabuse interact with my other drugs?

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

Antabuse

+

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Professional resources

- [Antabuse prescribing information](#)
- [Disulfiram \(AHFS Monograph\)](#)

Related treatment guides

- [Alcohol Use Disorder](#)

Further information

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

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

[Medical Disclaimer](#)

DRUG STATUS

Availability

Rx Prescription only

Pregnancy & Lactation

 Risk data available

CSA Schedule*

N/A Not a controlled drug



Approval History

10+ years FDA approved 1951



User Reviews & Ratings

7.8 / 10

[111 Reviews](#)

Images

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