

New Zealand Consumer Medicine Information

Antabuse[®]

Disulfiram 200 mg tablets

What is in this leaflet?

This leaflet answers some common questions about Antabuse[®].

It does not contain all the available information.

It does not take the place of talking to your doctor or pharmacist.

All medicines have risks and benefits. Your doctor has weighed the risks of your taking Antabuse[®] against the benefits they expect it will have for you.

If you have any concerns about taking this medicine, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

Keep this leaflet with the medicine. You may need to read it again.

What Antabuse[®] is used for

Antabuse[®] tablets are used to treat people with drinking problems. When you drink alcohol it is changed in the body into a chemical called acetaldehyde. Antabuse[®] prevents the chemical from being broken down, resulting in a high level of acetaldehyde in the body. This high level of acetaldehyde causes unpleasant physical reactions in the body. These unpleasant physical reactions should stop you from drinking further alcohol.

The physical reactions can be unpredictable, and symptoms can vary from person to person. Your doctor will explain the type of symptoms you will experience if you drink alcohol while taking Antabuse[®].

Your doctor may have prescribed Antabuse[®] for another reason. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you have any questions about why Antabuse[®] has been prescribed for you.

Before you use Antabuse[®]

When you must not use it

- If you have consumed alcohol within the previous 24 hours. This includes alcohol-containing preparations such as food prepared with wine, vinegar and certain cough or cold medication.

- If you have used any alcohol-containing remedies, tonics, toiletries, perfumes or sprays within the previous 24 hours.
- If you are sensitive (allergic) to any of the ingredients listed at the end of this leaflet.
- If you have severe heart disease or heart failure.
- If you suffer severe mood or personality disorder.
- If you have had a stroke or any other serious brain damage.
- If you have advanced liver or kidney disease.
- If you are pregnant.

Before you start to use it

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if:

- you are using any other medicines. This includes any that you buy **without** a prescription from your pharmacy, supermarket or health food shop such as heartburn tablets or iron supplements.
- you have diabetes, epilepsy, asthma, a thyroid condition or a heart condition.
- you have a liver or kidney condition.
- you have an allergic skin rash such as eczema.
- you are pregnant or plan on becoming pregnant.
- you are breast-feeding or planning to breast-feed.

What else you should know

Certain foods, liquid medicines, toiletries, perfumes, and 'non-alcoholic' or 'alcohol-free' wines and beers may contain enough alcohol to cause an Antabuse[®]-alcohol reaction. You should avoid taking these while you are also taking Antabuse[®].

If you stop taking Antabuse[®] you should wait at least 1 week before drinking alcohol. The unpleasant physical reactions with alcohol may occur for up to 3 weeks after your last dose of Antabuse[®].

Antabuse[®] can cause drowsiness in some people. You should not drive a vehicle or operate machinery until you are certain Antabuse[®] does not affect you in this way.

Some medicines may interfere with Antabuse and affect how it works.

- phenytoin and isoniazid
- medicines which stop blood clotting (warfarin)
- metronidazole and paraldehyde
- pain killers such as morphine, pethidine, amphetamines and barbiturates

How to use Antabuse®

Treatment with Antabuse® is usually started in a hospital or specialised clinic. It is important that you have not drunk alcohol for at least 24 hours before taking the first dose.

How to take it

Your doctor will tell you how to take Antabuse®. It is generally recommended to add the tablet(s) to a quarter-full glass of water or fruit juice. The tablet will cause the liquid to become fizzy. Stir the drink with a spoon until the tablet has dissolved and then drink immediately.

It is best to take the tablet(s) when you wake up. However, if the tablets cause you to feel drowsy, you should take them in the evening before you go to bed.

Dosage

Your doctor will tell you how many tablets you should take. For adults and the elderly the following is generally recommended:

- 4 tablets each day for the first 2-3 days.
- Then reduce the dose each day by one tablet until you are taking a dose of 1/2 to 1 tablet each day.
- Keep taking 1/2 to 1 tablet each day until your doctor advises you to stop.

How long to take it

Your doctor will tell you how long to take Antabuse®. You should not take it for more than 6 months without seeing your doctor.

If you forget to use Antabuse®

If it is more than 12 hours since the time you should have taken your tablet(s), skip the dose you missed and take your next tablet(s) when you are meant to. If it is less than 12 hours since the time you should have taken your tablet(s), take it as soon as you remember, and then go back to using it as you would normally.

Do not use a double dose of Antabuse® to make up for a dose that you left out. If you are not sure what to do, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

If you use too much Antabuse® (overdose) or if you drink alcohol while taking Antabuse®

If you think you or anyone else may have used too much of this medicine, or if you have been exposed to alcohol while taking this medicine:

- consult your doctor immediately *or*
- telephone the New Zealand Poisons Information Centre 0800 POISON (0800 764 766) for advice, *or*
- go to Accident and Emergency at your nearest hospital.

Do this even if there are no signs of discomfort or poisoning. Urgent medical attention may be required.

While you are using Antabuse®

Things you must do

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you become pregnant while using Antabuse®.

If you are about to be started on any new medicine, tell your doctor or pharmacist that you are using Antabuse®.

Tell your doctor if for any reason you have not used Antabuse® as prescribed. Otherwise your doctor may think that it was not effective and change your treatment unnecessarily.

Things you must not do

Do not give Antabuse® to anyone else, even if they have the same condition as you.

Do not use Antabuse® to treat any other complaints unless your doctor or pharmacist tells you to.

Side Effects

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you do not feel well while you are using Antabuse®.

Like other medicines Antabuse® can cause some side effects. If they occur, most are likely to be minor and temporary. However, some may be serious and require medical attention.

Ask your doctor or pharmacist to answer any questions you may have.

You must get urgent medical help if you have any of the following symptoms. You may be having an allergic reaction:

- You have difficulty breathing
- Your lips, face or throat swell or you have difficulty swallowing
- Your skin develops a severe rash

The following side effects have been reported following use of Antabuse®. Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you notice any of the following side effects and they worry you:

- mood changes (eg. depression or paranoia)
- jaundice (yellowing of the skin or whites of the eyes)
- pain, tingling, weakness or loss of sensation in hands and feet
- eye pain or changes in vision
- decreased sexual desire
- drowsiness and fatigue
- skin rash
- headache
- upset stomach
- bad breath
- dizziness

Some people get other side effects while using Antabuse®. Tell your doctor if you notice any unwanted side effect, especially if severe or persistent, or if there is a change in your health that you think might be caused by Antabuse®.

Do not be alarmed by this list of side effects. You may not experience any of them.

After Using Antabuse®

Storage

Antabuse® tablets must be stored in a cool dry place where the temperature stays below 25 °C.

Do not store Antabuse® in the bathroom, near a sink or in a car on hot days.

Heat and dampness can destroy some medicines.

Keep Antabuse® where children cannot reach it. A locked cupboard at least one-and-a-half metres above the ground is a good place to store medicines.

Do not use after the expiry date stated on the package.

Disposal

If your doctor or pharmacist tells you to stop using Antabuse® or it has passed its expiry date, ask your pharmacist what to do with any that is left over.

Further Information

If you have any further questions about Antabuse® tablets please consult your doctor or pharmacist.

Product Description

What it looks like

Antabuse® tablets are white, round, flat, effervescent tablets, 11mm in diameter, engraved “CDC” with a breakline on one side.

Antabuse® tablets are supplied in a plastic bottle of 100 tablets.

Ingredients

Antabuse® tablets contain disulfiram, povidone, microcrystalline cellulose, talc, tartaric acid, colloidal anhydrous silica, sodium bicarbonate, maize starch and magnesium stearate.

Sponsor

Antabuse® is distributed in New Zealand by:

Teva Pharma (New Zealand) Limited

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