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# DISULFIRAM (Antabuse) Fact Sheet for Patients

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**Generic Name:** Disulfiram (dye-SUL-fee-ram)

**Brand Name:** Antabuse

## What Does It Treat?

Moderate to severe alcohol use disorder.

## How Does It Work?

Disulfiram blocks the breakdown of alcohol in the body, which leads to a buildup of a toxic compound that can cause a bad reaction in people who drink alcohol while taking the medication. Especially when combined with other types of therapy or support, it can help encourage people to stop using alcohol.

## How Do I Take It?

Disulfiram can be taken once daily by mouth, with or without food, as a tablet. You must not start taking it until at least 12 hours after your last drink of alcohol.

## What is the Dose?

The typical dosage for disulfiram is 250-500 mg per day. It is important to follow your health care provider's instructions regarding the dose.

## How Long Will I Take It?

Different people take disulfiram for different lengths of time. Continue taking it as long as you and your provider find it helpful.

## What If I Miss a Dose?

If you miss a dose of disulfiram, take it as soon as you remember unless it is closer to the time of your next dose. Do not double your next dose.

## What Are Possible Side Effects?

- Most common: Headache, metallic taste, skin eruptions like acne, sleepiness.
- Rare: Changes in liver function.

## What Else Should I Know?

- Avoid drinking alcohol and ingesting any other forms of alcohol while taking disulfiram and for one to two weeks after stopping the medication. Other forms of alcohol include creams and ointments, cough syrups, mouthwashes, oral liquid medications, vinegars, ciders, and foods containing alcohol (such as rum cakes, chocolates with liquor inside, and various other desserts that may have alcohol).
- If you drink or ingest alcohol while taking disulfiram, you will experience a very unpleasant reaction that can include flushing, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, sweating, heart palpitations, and chest pain. Call your doctor or go to your nearest emergency room if you experience a reaction.
- Let your health care providers know you are taking disulfiram and consider carrying a wallet card or other alert stating you are taking disulfiram.

*Remember, this fact sheet provides general information about this medication. For more specific guidance and instructions, consult your health care provider.*