

DRONABINOL

Other NAMES: Marinol®, delta – 9 - tetrahydrocannabinol

WHY is this drug prescribed?

Dronabinol is a narcotic drug used to treat severe nausea and vomiting. It is in a family of drugs called cannabinoids (eg. marijuana). It is also used to increase appetite and weight gain.

HOW should this drug be taken?

Dronabinol is available in 2.5 mg, 5 mg and 10 mg capsules. To increase appetite and body weight, the usual initial dose is 2.5 mg twice daily. Depending on the results obtained, your doctor might decide to slowly increase the dose up to 20 mg a day. The dose may vary if dronabinol is used to treat nausea and vomiting caused by chemotherapy.

Dronabinol should be taken 1 hour before lunch and supper.

Your dosage is:
2.5 mg capsule
5 mg capsule
10 mg capsule

___ capsule (___mg) ___times a day

Dronabinol can be taken with or without food.

What should you do if you FORGET a dose?

If you miss a dose of dronabinol, take it as soon as possible. However, if it is time for your next dose, do not double the dose, just carry on with your regular schedule.

What ADVERSE EFFECTS can this drug cause? What should you do about them?

Dronabinol can cause **unsteadiness, dizziness, difficulty concentrating, drowsiness, euphoria, abnormal thinking, fatigue, anxiety, confusion, hallucinations, and paranoia.** Nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, and facial redness may also occur.

These effects may go away during treatment as your body adjusts to the drug. However, notify your doctor if any of these effects continue or become bothersome.

Inform your doctor **immediately** if abnormal or rapid heartbeat occurs.

It is important that you keep your doctor appointments and come for your laboratory tests so that your progress can be followed.

What other PRECAUTIONS should you follow while using this drug?

Before starting dronabinol, inform your doctor if you have already had in the past adverse reactions to dronabinol, nabilone (Cesamet®) or marijuana (pot). Also, notify your doctor if you are allergic to sesame oil, if you have heart disease (hypertension, abnormal heartbeat, angina), or a history of emotional disorders such as depression, bipolar disease (manic depression), and schizophrenia (psychosis, hallucinations).

As this drug may cause some people to become dizzy, drowsy or less alert than normal, you should NOT drive, use machinery or do anything else that could be dangerous if you are dizzy or are not alert.

Dronabinol can increase the effect of various drugs or substances. For example, it can increase the effects of alcohol and other central nervous system depressants such as sedatives, muscle relaxants, narcotics, drugs for seizures and antihistamines. Avoid taking alcohol while you are taking dronabinol. Inform your doctor and pharmacist of all prescribed and non-prescribed drugs you are taking. As well, you should inform them of natural products you are taking. If you wish to start a new drug or natural product, please consult with your pharmacist before doing so.

The safety of dronabinol during pregnancy or during breastfeeding has not yet been established. Until more information is known, dronabinol should NOT be used if you are pregnant. Also, breastfeeding should be avoided while you are taking dronabinol. Discuss this with your doctor if this is a concern.

How should this drug be STORED?

Dronabinol should be stored in a cool (8 - 15°C) dry place, protected from light and well out of the reach of children. Ensure that the drug has not expired by checking the expiry date (“EXP”) shown on the outside of the package.

Do not store in your bathroom or kitchen, as heat and moisture may cause the drug to be less active.

If you have any questions or concerns about this drug or if you are experiencing adverse effects, please discuss them with your pharmacist, doctor or nurse.

Write questions or concerns down to ensure they are addressed.

The following pharmacist is available to answer questions:

Pharmacist: _____

Telephone: _____

Reference: Product monograph Marinol® (dronabinol). Markham, ON, Canada: Solvay Pharma, 2007. Prepared by the Ontario HIV Pharmacy Professional Specialty Group, 2003. Reviewed 2009.

Additional medication fact sheets and updates may be found at: www.hivclinic.ca

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MEDICATION

FACT SHEET