



# Dronabinol

(*Marinol*<sup>®</sup>)

## What is Dronabinol?

Dronabinol helps to relieve the nausea and vomiting associated with the treatment of cancer, especially for those patients whose nausea and vomiting cannot be controlled with other medicines. Dronabinol can also help to stimulate appetite. Dronabinol is similar to an active substance found in marijuana.

## How should I take Dronabinol?

Take Dronabinol capsules by mouth. Follow the directions on the prescription label. Take your doses at regular intervals. Do not take your medicine more often than directed. Federal law prohibits the transfer of Dronabinol to any person other than the patient for whom it was prescribed.

## What if I miss a dose?

If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you can. If it is almost time for your next dose, take only that dose. Do not take double or extra doses.

## What are the common side effects?

Please see chapter 5, “Managing Symptoms at Home,” in the manual.

<b>What You May Expect</b>	<b>What You Should Do</b>
<b>Drowsiness or dizziness</b> may occur.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Do not drive, use machinery, or do anything that needs mental alertness until you know how Dronabinol affects you.</li><li>• To reduce the risk of dizzy or fainting spells, do not sit up or stand up quickly, especially if you have low blood pressure or are taking medicine to lower your blood pressure.</li><li>• Alcohol can increase drowsiness and dizziness and other side effects of Dronabinol; avoid alcoholic drinks.</li></ul>
<b>Mood changes</b> may occur. You may experience mood changes, easy laughter, or other changes in behavior.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The first time you take Dronabinol or have an increase in dose make sure there is a responsible person nearby.</li></ul>

**These are the most common side effects. Others may occur. Please report any problems to your doctor, pharmacist, or nurse.**

**Contact Your Nurse or Doctor Immediately If You Have:**

- Fast or irregular heartbeat (palpitations)
- Fainting spells, lightheadedness
- Hallucinations (seeing or hearing things that are not really there)
- Panic reactions
- Slurred speech

**Special Instructions**

Do not smoke marijuana while you are taking Dronabinol. Dronabinol is similar to one of the active substances found in marijuana. You are at increased risk of serious heart and/or nervous system side effects if these drugs are used together.

Notify your doctor, nurse or pharmacist if you are pregnant or breastfeeding. Dronabinol can be pass through breastmilk. Women who are breastfeeding should switch to formula. Use contraception when receiving Dronabinol. Talk to your doctor or nurse about any additional questions.

## Questions?

Call \_\_\_\_\_  
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Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns. UWMC Clinic staff are also available to help at any time.

## Drug-Drug Interactions

Other drugs may *interact* with Dronabinol. Drugs such as amphetamine or other stimulant drugs, caffeine, cocaine, medicines for colds and breathing difficulties should be avoided while you are taking Dronabinol.

Because Dronabinol can cause drowsiness, other medicines that also cause drowsiness may increase this effect of Dronabinol. Some medicines that cause drowsiness are:

- Alcohol-containing medicines or alcoholic drinks
- Barbiturates such as Phenobarbital
- Certain antidepressants or tranquilizers
- Muscle relaxants
- Certain antihistamines used in cold medicines

Ask your prescriber or health care professional about other medicines that may increase the effect of Dronabinol. Check with your doctor or pharmacist before you start taking any new drugs.

## Drug-Food Interactions

None known at this time.

For more complete information, please request an additional teaching sheet from the National Library of Medicine at [www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/druginformation.html](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/druginformation.html), your nurse, pharmacist, or visit the Resource Center.

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