

## Disulfiram

### Recovery-Focused Treatment for Alcohol Use Disorder

- It is important that you have not had any alcohol in the last 24 hours before starting this treatment.
- You must not consume **ANY** alcohol with disulfiram.
- Make sure any medicines or toiletries you buy do not contain alcohol.

#### How can disulfiram help me cut down or stop drinking?

- When combined with alcohol, disulfiram causes an extremely unpleasant reaction.
- Disulfiram does not reduce your urge or desire to drink.

#### How does disulfiram work?

- Disulfiram blocks the breakdown of alcohol. Alcohol becomes toxic in your body and an unpleasant reaction occurs (headache, redness of face, fast pulse, dizziness, low blood pressure, and vomiting).
- Disulfiram can help you increase your ability to choose not to drink.

#### Will I need other forms of treatment?

A successful alcohol treatment program will include a combination of medicine and social support, like Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) meetings, counseling, individual or group therapy, and sometimes hospital treatment.

#### What do I need to know before starting disulfiram?

- Disulfiram will not treat or prevent alcohol withdrawal symptoms.
- Disulfiram should be used cautiously if you have liver disease or diabetes.
- Taking medicine for an alcohol use disorder is not substituting one drug for another.
- You must be alcohol-free for 24 hours before starting disulfiram.
- The reaction with alcohol can occur for up to 14 days after the last dose.

You should not take disulfiram if you:

- Are pregnant, planning on getting pregnant, or breastfeeding;
- Have had a rash or allergic reaction to disulfiram;
- Suffer from severe heart disease, high blood pressure, severe mental illness, or had a stroke; or
- Are presently taking or have recently used certain medications or alcohol-containing products.

## How should I take disulfiram?

- The most common dose of disulfiram is 250 mg/day.
- If you miss a dose, do not double up your next dose.
- Be sure to get the blood draw ordered by your health care provider to check on your liver health.

## What are some of the side effects of disulfiram?

Common Side Effects	What Can I Do if I Experience This?
Metallic Aftertaste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Drink plenty of fluids, dissolve sugarless candy in mouth</li><li>• Keep good oral hygiene and brush the tongue as well</li><li>• Rinse mouth with a salt water solution (one teaspoon salt with 8 ounces of water)</li></ul>
Nausea	Avoid products that may contain alcohol
Itchy Skin	Drink plenty of fluids, moisturize skin

## Less common, but can be severe:

Tell your provider immediately if you have any of the following:

- Liver injury (persistent nausea/vomiting, severe stomach/abdominal pain, dark urine, yellowing eyes/skin), abnormal thinking and perceptions, numbness, tingling nerve pain, or sudden worsening of vision.
- Discuss any symptoms that you think may be due to this medication with your healthcare provider.

All medicines can have side effects. Not everyone has side effects though. They usually get better as your body gets used to the new medicine. Talk with your provider or pharmacist if any of the above side effects trouble you.



## How long do I have to take disulfiram?

- You and your doctor will decide on your treatment plan. Most people take disulfiram for 6 months and often longer.
- Do not stop your medication without talking to your healthcare provider first.

**Contact info:**

**Veterans Crisis Line**

1-800-273-TALK (8255) or Text - 838255