

## DISULFIRAM

*dye-sul-fah-ram*

### What does it do?

*Disulfiram* is used to help you stop drinking alcohol. Drinking alcohol while taking *disulfiram* causes a very unpleasant and dangerous reaction. The reaction starts within about 10 minutes of drinking alcohol and may last several hours.

### Before you start

- Tell your doctor if you have heart, liver or kidney problems, a mental health problem, or if you have ever had a seizure or a stroke.
- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant, planning to become pregnant, or breastfeeding.
- You must **not** drink any alcohol for at least 24 hours before starting, while taking, and for three weeks after stopping *disulfiram*.

### How should you take it?

Take *disulfiram* regularly as directed with a glass of water. You can also dissolve the tablets in water or juice.

### What if you forget a dose?

Take the missed dose as soon as possible. If it is close to the time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and carry on as normal. Do not take two doses at the same time.

### Can you take other medicines?

Some medicines available without a prescription may react with *disulfiram* including:

- liquid medicines containing alcohol such as cough syrups

Tell your pharmacist or doctor about all medicines or treatments that you may be taking including vitamins, herbal products (some may contain alcohol) or recreational drugs (e.g. cocaine).

### What side effects might you notice?

| Side Effects  | Recommended action              |
|---|---------------------------------|
| Alcohol/disulfiram reaction – flushing, trouble breathing, fast heartbeat, headache, dizziness, nausea, vomiting<br>Symptoms of liver problems including: yellow skin or eyes, itching, dark urine, pale bowel motions, abdominal pain<br>Unusual behaviour or thinking, mood changes | Tell your doctor immediately    |
| Changes in vision<br>Numbness or tingling of the fingers or toes  | Tell your doctor                |
| Drowsiness, tiredness or weakness<br>Bad breath, changes in taste, stomach upset<br>Impotence, less interest in sex   | Tell your doctor if troublesome |

If you notice any other effects, discuss them with your doctor or pharmacist.

### Other information:

- Some sauces, vinegars, perfumes, aftershaves, hand gels, sprays and even “non-alcoholic” drinks may contain enough alcohol to cause a reaction with *disulfiram*.