

RECOVERY



Acamprosate Using Medications to Help Manage Alcohol Use Disorder with HIV

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
PBM Academic Detailing Service

Drinking and HIV

Many people living with HIV drink more than people without HIV. Drinking can be a problem for several reasons.

Drinking unsafe amounts of alcohol may weaken your immune system, and ability to fight illness or infection.

Drinking at risky levels can:

- Be harmful to your liver, and increase risk for developing cirrhosis or liver cancer
- Make it more likely that you will take risks, such as have unsafe sex
- Make you more likely to abuse other drugs
- Make it harder to take your medications on time every day

Recommended Drinking Limits

	Single-day Limit	Weekly Limit
Men Age 65 or under	4 or less standard-size drinks	14 or less standard-size drinks
Women or Age over 65	3 or less standard-size drinks	7 or less standard-size drinks

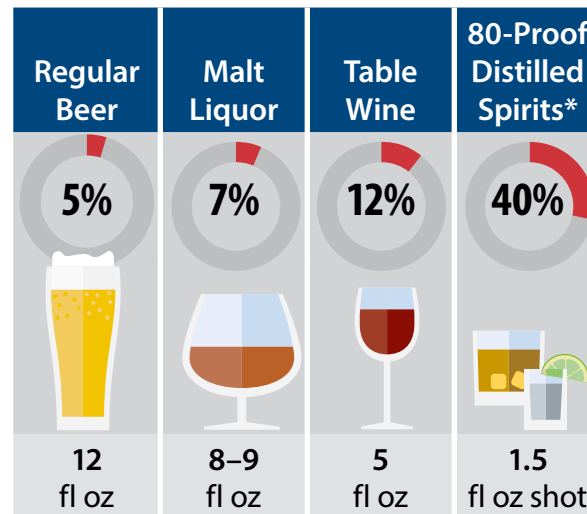
How can acamprosate help me cut down or stop drinking?

Acamprosate is used to help a person who has recently stopped drinking alcohol continue to choose not to drink.

A successful alcohol treatment program will include a combination of medicine and social support, like:

- Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) meetings
- Counseling
- Individual or group therapy
- Hospital treatment, sometimes

What percent of "pure alcohol" is in one standard-size drink of...?



* Gin, rum, tequila, vodka, whiskey, etc.

What do I need to know before starting acamprosate?



- Acamprosate works best in those who have stopped drinking for 3 to 4 days before starting this medication.
- If you have kidney problems, you will require a lower dose of medication.
- You should not take acamprosate if you are pregnant, planning on getting pregnant, or breastfeeding.
- Taking medicine for an alcohol use disorder is not substituting one drug for another.

How should I take acamprosate?

The recommended dose of acamprosate is two 333 mg tablets (666 mg) by mouth three times daily.



What are some side effects of acamprosate?

Common Side Effects	What Can I Do if I Experience This?
Mild Diarrhea	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drink plenty of water, and fluids to prevent dehydration• Eat soft bland foods: bananas, plain rice, toast, crackers
Nausea or Upset Stomach	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take with food• Eat plain rice, toast, or crackers

Notify your provider if you experience:

- Nervousness
- Difficulty sleeping
- Depressed mood
- Thoughts of hurting yourself or others

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 acamprosate?

You and your provider will decide on your treatment plan.

Most take acamprosate for at least 6 months and often longer.

For more information about drinking and HIV visit the VA's website:

<http://www.hiv.va.gov/patient/daily/alcohol-drugs/index.asp>

**Veteran's Crisis Line
1-800-273-TALK (8255) or
Text - 838255**

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Contact info:

