

RECOVERY



Baclofen

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

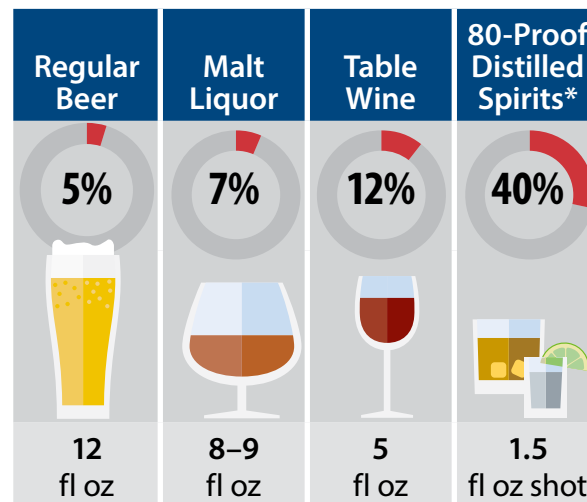
How can baclofen help me cut down or stop drinking?

Baclofen is a medication that reduces your urge or craving to drink, and can help you stop drinking.

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 baclofen?



- Baclofen is commonly used to treat muscle spasms.
- Some studies have shown it may also be useful to treat alcohol use disorder.
- Taking medicine for alcohol use disorder is not substituting one drug for another.

How should I take baclofen?

- The most common dose of baclofen is 10 milligrams (mg) by mouth three times daily.
- Do not stop this medication suddenly as it may cause a reaction.
- Discuss with your provider before changing dose.



What are some side effects of baclofen?

Common Side Effects	What Can I Do if I Experience This?
Drowsiness	Most common side effect. Your body will likely adjust over time
Headache	You may take a non-opioid pain reliever if recommended by your provider
Nausea or Upset Stomach	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take with food• Eat plain rice, toast, or crackers
Dizziness	Rise slowly to prevent falls

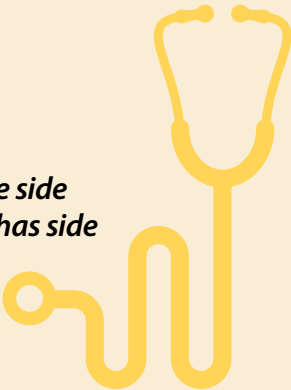
Do not drive, use machinery, or do anything that may be dangerous until you know how the medicine affects you.

Notify your provider if you experience:

- Allergic reactions (skin rash, hives, swelling of lips)
- Chest pain
- Hallucinations
- Seizures

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 baclofen?

You and your provider will decide on your treatment plan.

Most take baclofen 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**

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
VA PBM Academic Detailing Service

Contact info:

