

RECOVERY



Acamprosate

Using Medications to Help Manage Alcohol Use Disorder with Hepatitis C

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
PBM Academic Detailing Service

Drinking and Hepatitis C

If you have Hepatitis C, drinking alcohol can be the single biggest threat to your health.

Drinking alcohol weakens your immune system, and reduces your body's ability fight the virus.

Drinking alcohol carries a much higher risk of:

- Scarring of the liver leading to a worsening of the disease
- Cirrhosis
- Liver cancer

If you have Hepatitis C, there is no safe level of alcohol use. Decreasing, or stopping your use of alcohol is the most important thing that you can change.

By changing this behavior, it can lower your chance of developing or dying from cirrhosis.

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

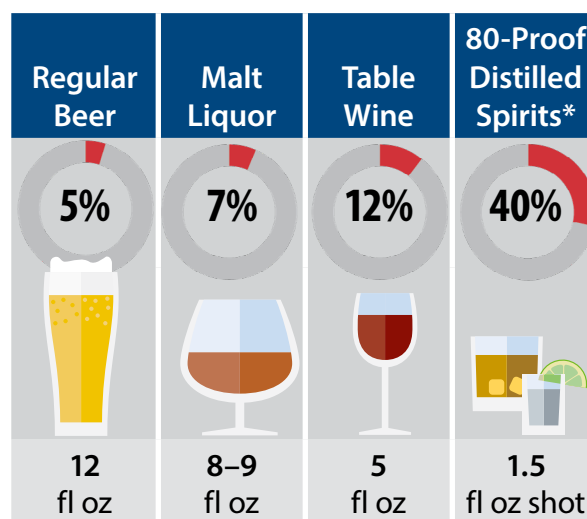
How can acamprosate help me cut down or stop drinking?

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.

Remember that even if your Hepatitis C is cured, alcohol can still increase your risk of liver damage.



What are some side effects of acamprosate?

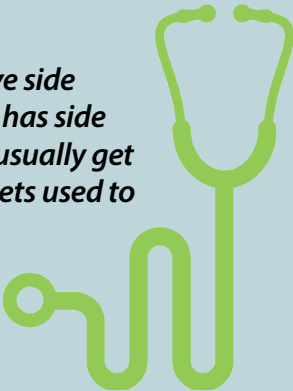
Common Side Effects	What Can I Do if I Experience This?
Mild Diarrhea	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drink plenty of water, and fluids to prevent dehydration• Eat soft bland foods: bananas, plain rice, toast, crackers
Nausea or Upset Stomach	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take with food• Eat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

<http://www.hepatitis.va.gov/patient/daily/alcology/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:

