

# RECOVERY



## Baclofen

### Using Medications to Help Manage Alcohol Use Disorder with Hepatitis C

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**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

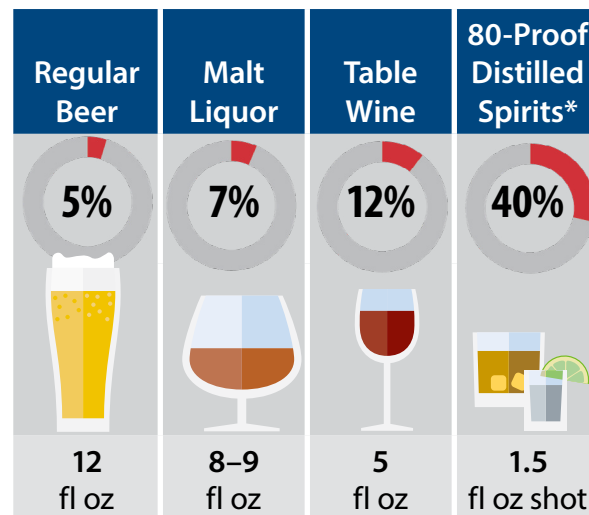
## How can baclofen help me cut down or stop drinking?

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.



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

## 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"><li>• Take with food</li><li>• Eat plain rice, toast, or crackers</li></ul>
Dizziness	Rise slowly to prevent falls

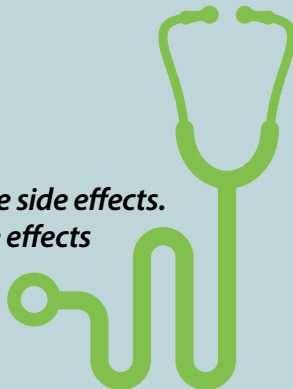
***Do not drive, use machinery, or do anything that may be dangerous until you know how the medicine affects you.***

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 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:

