

RECOVERY



Disulfiram

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 disulfiram help me cut down or stop drinking?

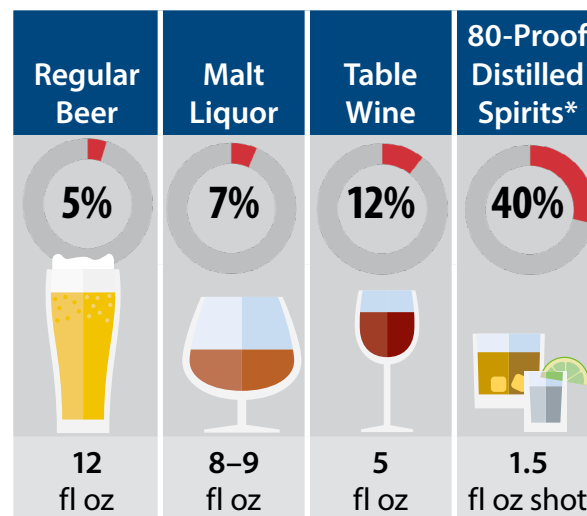
When combined with alcohol, disulfiram causes an extremely unpleasant reaction.

Disulfiram can help you 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 disulfiram?



- You must be alcohol free for at least 24 to 48 hours before starting disulfiram.
- Reaction to alcohol can occur up to 14 days after the last dose of disulfiram.
- Taking medicine for alcohol use disorder is not substituting one drug for another.
- You must not consume any alcohol with disulfiram. (Products containing alcohol may include some medications, mouthwash, hand gels, hair gel, gel deodorant etc.).

How should I take disulfiram?

The most common dose of disulfiram is 250 milligrams (mg) by mouth daily.

Be sure to get the blood draw ordered by your health care provider to check on your liver health.



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

What are some side effects of disulfiram?

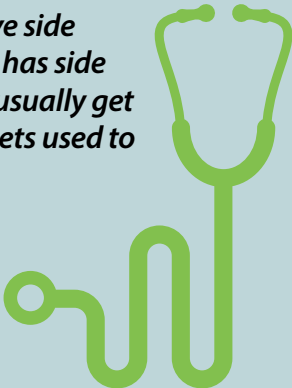
Common Side Effects	What Can I Do if I Experience This?
Metalic or Garlic Aftertaste	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drink plenty of fluids• Dissolve sugarless candy in mouth• Keep good oral hygiene and brush tongue well
Itchy Skin	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drink plenty of fluids• Moisturize skin
Nausea	Avoid products that may contain alcohol

Notify your provider if you experience:

- Abnormal thinking
- Numb and tingling nerve pain
- Sudden and reduced vision
- Liver injury (persistent nausea/ vomiting, severe stomach pain, dark urine, yellowing of eyes and skin)

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 disulfiram?

You and your provider will decide on your treatment plan.

Most people take disulfiram 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/alcohol/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:

