

RECOVERY



Naltrexone

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 naltrexone help me cut down or stop drinking?

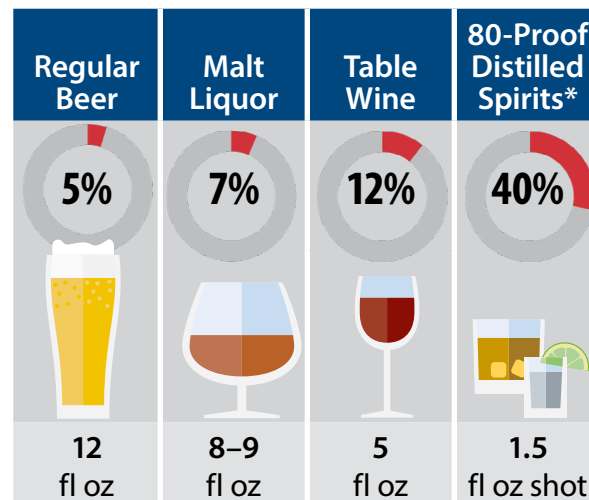
Naltrexone can reduce your urge or desire to drink and help you choose not to drink.

Naltrexone can also interfere with your desire to continue to drink if you start drinking again.

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 naltrexone?



Naltrexone blocks opioid pain medication's ability to work.

Do not start naltrexone until 7 to 10 days have passed since your last use of opioid or narcotic pain medicine like oxycodone, hydrocodone, and morphine.

Taking medicine for alcohol use disorder is not substituting one drug for another.

How should I take naltrexone?

The recommended dose of naltrexone for the treatment of alcohol use disorder is 50-100 milligrams (mg) by mouth once daily.

Vivitrol® is a long-acting injectable form of naltrexone.

It is given by a trained healthcare professional.



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

What are some side effects of naltrexone?

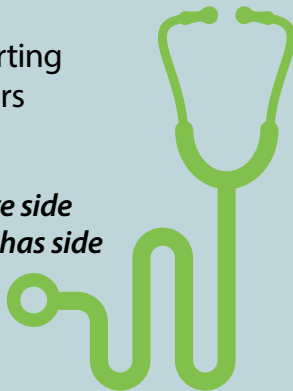
| Common Side Effects | What Can I Do if I Experience This? |
|-------------------------|---|
| Headaches | You may take a non-opioid pain reliever if recommended by your provider |
| Diarrhea | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drink plenty of water to prevent dehydration• Eat soft bland foods: bananas, 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:

- Loss of appetite
- Sleep problems
- Dizziness
- Nervousness
- 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 naltrexone?

You and your provider will decide on your treatment plan.

Most take naltrexone 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:

