

RECOVERY



Topiramate

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

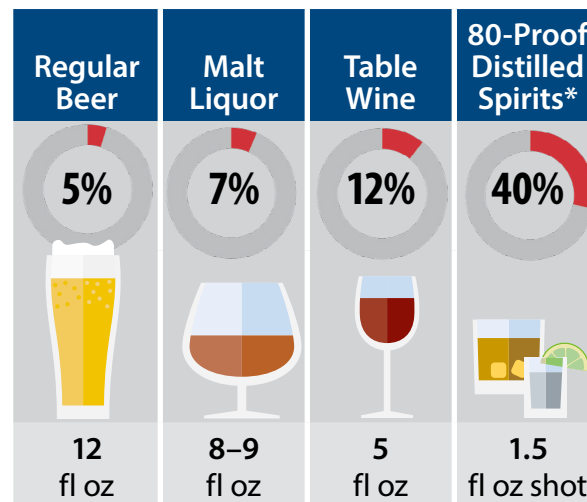
How can topiramate help me cut down or stop drinking?

Topiramate can help decrease the desire to drink and help you remain sober.

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 topiramate?



What is topiramate?

Topiramate is used for seizures and migraines, and has also been shown to help treat alcohol use disorder.

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

How should I take topiramate?

The recommended dose of topiramate for the treatment of alcohol use disorder is 200 milligrams (mg) by mouth divided into two doses daily.

To minimize side effects you will be started on a low dose that will be increased slowly.

It is important to drink plenty of fluids while taking topiramate.



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

What are some side effects of topiramate?

Common Side Effects	What Can I Do if I Experience This?
Tingling, prickling, or numbness	Avoid irritants such as hot water, tight fitting shoes or clothes
Difficulty concentrating, speech difficulties, slowed thoughts or movements	Contact your provider if they are notable or worsening symptoms
Dizziness	Rise slowly to prevent falls
Loss of appetite/weight loss	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maintain a healthy balanced diet• Monitor weight

Notify your provider if you experience:

- Changes in vision, or in urine such as blood or painful urination.
- Mood changes such as depressed mood or irritability.

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 topiramate?

You and your provider will decide on your treatment plan.

Most take topiramate 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

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Contact info: