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PSYCHIATRY

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PATIENT EDUCATION

Acamprosate

Campral / Generic delayed-release tablets

A guide for adults taking acamprosate.
Follow the directions on your prescription and your provider's recommendations.

THREE DAILY DOSES | KIDNEY FUNCTION DETERMINES THE DOSE

Formulations: Delayed-release tablets are taken on a regular schedule, usually three times daily. Kidney function determines whether a lower dose or another medication is needed.

What it is used for

Acamprosate helps adults with alcohol use disorder maintain abstinence after they have stopped drinking. It works alongside counseling, recovery support, and an agreed treatment plan.

It does not treat alcohol withdrawal or prevent its complications. If you drink heavily or have had withdrawal seizures, consult with your provider before stopping alcohol.

How it works

Repeated alcohol exposure changes the balance between calming and stimulating signals in the brain. Acamprosate affects this signaling during recovery and can help make continued abstinence more manageable.

What to expect over time

Treatment supports ongoing recovery; it does not create an immediate feeling of calm or remove every craving. The benefit is assessed by drinking patterns, cravings, and progress toward your goals.

Keep follow-up visits even when recovery is going well. Schedule an earlier appointment if your mood gets worse.

Taking your medication

- Start after withdrawal treatment and alcohol abstinence, as directed. Swallow tablets whole; do not crush or chew.
- Take with or without food. Linking doses to regular meals may make them easier to remember.
- If you miss a dose, take it when you remember unless it is almost time for the next dose. Then skip it. Do not double a dose.
- If you drink while taking it, continue your prescribed medication and contact your provider. Review what led to drinking and what support would help.

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ACAMPROSATE / 02

Side effects and safety

Possible side effects

- Diarrhea or stomach discomfort
- Nausea, gas, or reduced appetite
- Dizziness, itching, or trouble sleeping

Keeping track of treatment

Some side effects resolve with time; others may require a change of medication. Discuss persistent or bothersome side effects with your provider.

Kidney function should be checked before starting. Report persistent diarrhea, dehydration, low mood, or new suicidal thoughts.

Track alcohol use and situations that trigger cravings. A return to drinking is a reason to adjust care, not to abandon treatment.

If you take too much

For a suspected overdose, call Poison Control at **1-800-222-1222** immediately, even if you feel well. Call 911 for a seizure, collapse, trouble breathing, or inability to wake.

Before you start

Do not use acamprosate with severe kidney impairment. Tell your provider about kidney disease, depression, and any previous reaction to this medication.

Discuss pregnancy, pregnancy plans, and breastfeeding with your provider. Treatment decisions should consider both the medication and the condition being treated.

Medicines and interactions

Review all your medications with your provider, including over-the-counter medicines and supplements. Have new medications checked before taking them.

Acamprosate has relatively few drug interactions, but your full list still matters, especially if kidney function changes. It does not protect you from the effects of alcohol or from interactions involving other medicines.

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Living with your treatment

When to get help

Emergency symptoms. Get emergency care for trouble breathing, swelling of the face or throat, a seizure, or collapse.

Prompt medical advice. Contact your provider promptly for a new rash, severe dizziness, or a major change in mood or behavior.

If you feel unsafe or have thoughts of self-harm, call 911 or go to an emergency department.

Your questions answered

Will drinking make me sick?
Acamprosate does not cause the alcohol reaction associated with disulfiram. Drinking can still harm your health and recovery; contact your provider if it happens.

How long will I take it?
Duration depends on your recovery, preferences, and risk of returning to drinking. Review the plan with your provider rather than stopping when cravings first improve.

Everyday tips

Plan for the midday dose when away from home.

Keep recovery contacts and a plan for cravings available.

Discuss ongoing diarrhea rather than cutting doses yourself.

Storage and safety

Keep medication in its labeled container, away from excess heat and moisture and out of reach of children and pets. Do not share it. Ask a pharmacy about disposal of unused medication.

Sources

MedlinePlus: Acamprosate

Educational handout; does not replace your prescription or provider's recommendations.