

Acamprosate (say uh-kam-pruh-sayt)

What is acamprosate?

This medicine is used to treat alcohol use disorder. A person usually starts this medicine when they are getting ready to stop or have recently stopped using alcohol.

Some signs of alcohol use disorder:

- cravings for alcohol
- drinking more alcohol than intended
- continuing to drink alcohol even though it causes issues in your personal or work life

My goal is to:

- ☐ Completely stop drinking alcohol.
- ☐ Limit how much I drink to only _____ drinks each week.
- ☐ Reduce how much I crave alcohol.
- ☐ _____

How does acamprosate work?

Over time, alcohol use causes an imbalance in the chemicals in your brain.

Acamprosate helps balance out these chemicals by changing your brain's reward system so you crave alcohol less and it feels less rewarding if you do drink alcohol.

Ways this medicine can help you:

- **Reduce** your cravings for alcohol.
- **Reduce** the chances of returning to alcohol use.
- **Increase** the number of days you do not drink alcohol.

Do I have to pay for this medicine?

Pharmacare covers the cost of this medicine under specific criteria. Please talk to your prescriber or pharmacist to learn more about who can get this medicine.

How do I take acamprosate?

- Take this medicine 3 times a day.
For example, morning, mid-day, and evening.
- Make sure to take this medicine every day. It will not work as well if you miss taking any tablets.
- You can take this medicine with or without food.
- Swallow the tablet whole. Do not crush or chew tablets.

What do I do if I do miss a dose?

If you miss taking a dose, take it as soon as possible.

If it is almost time for your next dose, skip your missed dose and return to your regular schedule.

Do not take 2 doses at the same time.

To help you remember to take the medicine, try using a reminder alarm.

What else should I know?

- Acamprosate does not interact with alcohol, but it works best if you do not drink any alcohol.
- This medicine is meant to reduce your craving for alcohol. If you continue to crave alcohol, speak to your prescriber. It could mean this medicine is not right for you.
- Always check with your prescriber and/or pharmacist before taking any new medicines, including prescription, over-the-counter, herbal medicines, and supplements.

What should I look out for?

Common Side Effects



- 1. Loose bowel movements (diarrhea)**
If you have diarrhea, drink plenty of fluids. Water is best. Eat small meals. The diarrhea should go away within 1 to 2 weeks after starting the medicine.



- 2. Feeling sick to the stomach (nausea)**
Try taking this medicine with food. Eat small meals more often during the day. Drink plenty of water. If you throw up right after taking this medicine, call your pharmacist for advice. You might need to take an extra dose.



- 3. Little or no appetite**
Eat small meals more often during the day. Talk to your prescriber if this feeling does not go away within 1 to 2 weeks.



- 4. General muscle or body aches**
Rest often. Soothe the aching muscles with either warm compresses or ice packs.



- 5. Feeling nervous or anxious**
Try to have less caffeine, such as coffee, tea, or energy drinks. Talk to your prescriber or pharmacist if this bothers you.

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Rare but Serious Side Effects

1. Suicidal thinking or behaviour

You could start to think about harming yourself or ending your life. Call 9-1-1 or 1-800-SUICIDE (784-2433). Go to the nearest Emergency Room right away.

2. Chest pain

This medicine can cause your heart to race and you might have chest pain. Call 9-1-1 or go to the nearest Emergency Room right away.

When should I get help?

See your healthcare prescriber as soon as possible if:

- You are bothered by any of the side effects.
- You have any questions or concerns about this medicine or your alcohol use.

If you do not have a prescriber, or they are not available, visit the closest **Rapid Access Addiction Clinic**:

Abbotsford	102-32463 Simon Avenue Phone: 604-851-3752
Chilliwack	45600 Menholm Road Phone: 604-703-6976
Mission	7298 Hurd Street Phone: 604-814-5625
New Westminster	330 East Columbia Street Phone: 604-520-4253
Surrey	13740 – 94A Avenue Phone: 604-587-3755 (Option 3)
Vancouver	2nd floor, 1081 Burrard Street Phone: 604-806-8867
Victoria	1119 Pembroke Street Phone: 250-591-3776

Call 9-1-1 or go to the nearest Emergency Room if:

- You notice any of these signs of an allergic reaction: rash, itching and swelling (especially of the face, tongue, or throat), severe dizziness, trouble breathing.
- You have either of the rare but serious side effects.
- You use alcohol and it makes you feel like you are either very intoxicated or in bad withdrawal.

It's good to ask questions

Anytime you have any questions or concerns about taking this medicine, talk with one of your healthcare team.

Call 8-1-1 (HealthLinkBC) after hours and for any other health advice.

HealthLinkBC is open 24 hours a day and available in 130 languages. For an interpreter, say your language in English. Wait until an interpreter comes on the phone.

This information does not replace the advice given to you by your healthcare provider.