Acamprosate

Information for Patients Prescribed Acamprosate in Hertfordshire

What is acamprosate and how should it be taken?

Acamprosate (also called Campral®) is used to help treat alcohol dependence by reducing the risk of relapse, as it reduces cravings for alcohol. Acamprosate comes in 333mg tablets.

- The usual dose of acamprosate is two tablets taken three times a day (e.g., at breakfast, in the afternoon [lunch or tea] and at night).
- If you weigh less than 60kg the dose is smaller as four tablets taken each day (e.g., two at breakfast, one at lunchtime and one in the evening).

Acamprosate is usually best taken with a meal. You should swallow the tablets whole with at least half a glass of water whilst sitting or standing. This is to make sure that the tablets reach your stomach and do not stick in your throat. Do not chew or crush the tablets as they have a coating that stops them dissolving in stomach acid.

Acamprosate is not addictive, and if it stopped suddenly, there are no "withdrawal" symptoms, even after a year of taking it, but that means it will stop working. If you do start to drink alcohol again, keep taking the acamprosate but discuss this with your GP or alcohol misuse specialist as they will be able to advise you what to do next.

What monitoring will I need while taking acamprosate?

You may need to have blood tests done before you start taking acamprosate. There are no specific monitoring requirements or routine blood tests needed during your treatment.

How long will I need to take acamprosate for?

After 12 months your treatment will be stopped.

Who will prescribe my acamprosate?

Change Grow Live (CGL) will begin prescribing acamprosate (one-month supply), and if it is helping you, your GP practice will then take over prescribing of acamprosate for you from month 2 to month 12.

Who will review my acamprosate treatment?

To ensure acamprosate is helping you, you will need to be reviewed by a health care professional throughout the course of treatment. The reviews will take place by CGL: within one month of initiation, monthly for the first 6 months and then at an interval agreed with CGL.

In your CGL review, the health care professional will check whether you are following your aftercare plan, which includes activities like attending support groups as agreed with CGL at the start of your treatment. They will also ask if you have drunk any alcohol. They may ask you to answer some questions about your alcohol use. This is to decide if you need extra support from CGL. CGL will provide updates to your GP Practice every three months. If there is any reason CGL feel acamprosate should be stopped before the end of your 12-month course, CGL will inform you and your GP Practice. Your GP will then stop prescribing acamprosate.

How do I order repeat acamprosate prescriptions from my GP?

You should request an acamprosate prescription at least a week before your current supply will finish. This gives your GP Practice time to arrange a new prescription.

What additional support is available to you?

To ensure you get the most from your acamprosate treatment, you should also have counselling or other support whilst taking this medication. There are several different options available, which will be recommended when you agree your aftercare plan with CGL. You may be offered one or more options. These include:

- CGL Relapse Prevention Programme weekly (Spectrum Drug & Alcohol Recovery Services | Change Grow Live)
- CGL SMART Group (Self-Help Addiction Recovery | UK Smart Recovery)
- Fellowship Meetings such as Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) (www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk)
- Building Better Opportunities (Info - Hertfordshire Building Better Opportunities (BBO) (changegrowlive.org))
- MIND (Drug and alcohol addiction - useful contacts - Mind)
- Breaking Free Online (Breaking Free Online | Recovery Program for Alcohol & Drugs)

Other useful information

Further information about acamprosate can be found in the manufacturer's Patient Information Leaflet included in the medication package and covers topics on possible side effects and precautions. If you have any questions about your treatment or managing your alcohol use, speak to your alcohol misuse specialist, GP, local pharmacist, key worker, or other healthcare professional.

Further reading

This information has been adapted from the following sources:

Hertfordshire Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust acamprosate patient information leaflet

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