

Inpatient alcohol detoxification process

- On discharge from hospital, the patient will continue to be followed up by their Care Co-ordinator with the Countywide Specialist Substance Misuse Service.
- Usually the GP will be asked to continue the prescribing and the Care Coordinator will check that there are no problems with the medication and that you are taking it properly.
- All clients undergoing alcohol detoxification will be considered for Acamprosate treatment unless there are strong reasons why they should not take it.
- The Countywide Specialist Substance Misuse Service will provide updates and research information to your General Practitioner (GP) on Acamprosate.

Patients undergoing community detoxification

- Acamprosate should be considered for all patients undergoing community alcohol detoxification.
- It can be prescribed by a GP following assessment by the Countywide Specialist Substance Misuse Service.

Support groups and contact details

AA UK 24 hour Helpline	0845 7697555
AA Local Meetings	01452 418515
Drink Line	0800 9178282
Al-Anon Family Groups	020 74030888
Dry Out Now	0845 3700203
NHS Direct	0845 4647

Independence Trust (formerly GDAS)

Gloucester	01452 876440
Cheltenham	01242 584881
Stroud	01453 755711
Forest of Dean	01594 825656

Countywide Specialist Substance Misuse Service

West Gloucestershire Team	01452 891260
East Gloucestershire Team	01242 845614
Criminal Justice Drugs Team	01452 545779
Branchlea Cross	01242 845600

Primary Care Substance Misuse Service

Countywide Team	01452 523151
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Acamprosate

Acamprosate Information Guidelines

Acamprosate is used in the treatment of people with alcohol problems. It is thought to work by correcting the chemical abnormalities in the brain caused by chronic alcohol misuse.

It helps patients by reducing the craving for alcohol. It has been well researched and has been shown to double people's chances of remaining abstinent (dry) from alcohol.

Acamprosate also reduces the severity and length of any alcohol relapses and may reduce the anxiety associated with the prolonged alcohol withdrawal symptoms.

It can be used during or before alcohol detoxification and it could protect your brain whilst you are having an alcohol detoxification.

It is not an addictive drug and can be taken in combination with Antabuse and Naltrexone if necessary.

How is it taken?

- Acamprosate tablets are 333 mgs.
- For people over the weight of 9 stone 7lbs (60 kilograms) the dose is 2 tablets x 3 times daily.
- For people under the weight of 9 stone 7 lbs (60 kilograms) the dose is 4 tablets daily.
- It is usually started before you have your detox or on the first day of your detoxification.

- Substance Misuse Counselling should also be given to patients receiving Acamprosate. This may be from the Countywide Specialist Substance Misuse Service (CSSMS), GDAS or AA.
- Treatment should be continued for 12 months unless there are any problems with side effects or lack of effectiveness.

Side Effects

The most common (unwanted) side-effects of Acamprosate are diarrhoea, nausea, vomiting and abdominal pains. These are usually mild and wear off after a couple of weeks on the tablets.

Some people are allergic to Acamprosate and develop rashes. If you are allergic to Acamprosate you should not take it.

Acamprosate should not affect your driving or being able to operate machinery.

There have been no reports of fatal overdose, and it does not affect how other drugs work.

Are there any people who should not take Acamprosate?

- Acamprosate has not been tested for safety in pregnant women.
- Acamprosate has not been tested for safety in people over the age of 65 years old.
- Acamprosate should not be given to people with very severe kidney disease, or people with signs and symptoms of serious liver failure.
- It should not be given to people who have been previously hypersensitive to the drug.
- It is not safe for women who are breast feeding.

