

Campral (Acamprosate)

— Patient Information



What is Campral?

Campral is a medication that helps reduce cravings for alcohol in people recovering from alcohol dependence. It lowers the risk of relapse and doesn't cause adverse effects if you drink alcohol.

How Does It Work?

Long-term heavy drinking can change your brain's chemistry, making it harder to stop. Campral works by restoring this chemical balance, reducing cravings and helping you stay alcohol-free.

When Should I Start Taking It?

Start Campral after you've stopped drinking and your withdrawal symptoms have settled, usually within 4-7 days. It doesn't treat withdrawal symptoms like shakes or anxiety, so you will need withdrawal treatment for those before starting Campral.

How Long Does It Take to Work?

Campral takes about a week to start working. The tablets release the medication slowly over time, so swallow them whole—don't crush, cut, or chew them. It's available on prescription and is affordable under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS).

Are There Side Effects?

Side effects are usually mild and short-lived. The most common are diarrhoea, headaches, and nausea.

How Will I Feel?

Unless you experience side effects, you might not notice any changes. Campral doesn't make you feel high or sedated.

Can I Take Other Medications?

Campral is generally safe to use with other medications, including antidepressants, naltrexone, sedatives, or Antabuse. However, it shouldn't be taken if you're pregnant, breastfeeding, or have severe kidney or liver disease.

Is It Safe to Drive?

Campral doesn't cause sedation, so it usually won't affect your ability to drive or operate machinery.

What If I Drink Alcohol?

Campral is meant to help you avoid alcohol, but if you do drink, there won't be an adverse reaction. Continue taking Campral as prescribed, even if you have a short relapse and please get in contact with us.

How Should I Take It?

Campral is usually taken as two tablets three times a day with meals but if you are less than 60kg it is normally taken at a reduced dosage of two tablets followed by one then one tablet. Please follow your doctor's prescription as there are other methods of taking it.

What If I Miss a Dose?

Take Campral regularly as directed. If you miss a dose, just take the next one at the usual time—don't double up.

How Long Will I Need to Take It?

It may take 6-12 months for your brain to fully recover from alcohol dependence. During this time, counselling is important for successful treatment. Your GP, psychiatrist, psychologist, or a Drug and Alcohol specialist can help with this.

This handout is a general overview. If you have any questions or concerns about your medications, always consult your doctor or pharmacist.

