

Acamprosate Discharge Information for Primary Care

Date: _____

Client: _____

Dear _____

This client has been started on **acamprosate** as an anti-craving medication for alcohol use disorder (AUD).

Acamprosate is a GABA agonist and NMDA glutamate antagonist. **Acamprosate and naltrexone are the two first-line treatments of AUD;** acamprosate is a good alternative to naltrexone in those with advanced liver disease, intolerance or contraindications to naltrexone, or in those who take opioids. Acamprosate relieves subacute withdrawal symptoms such as insomnia, dysphoria, and cravings. Acamprosate works best in patients who are abstinent from alcohol for one to two days before starting it and who intend to remain abstinent.

Acamprosate is provided in 333mg tablets. The usual dose is 666mg (two tabs) three times daily (twice daily for those <60kg). Common dose-related side effects experienced on this medication include diarrhea, fatigue, and anxiety; these are likely to resolve over time. Titrate to the usual dose within one week to minimize side effects. Acamprosate is covered by ODB with LU code 531.

Therapeutic results are best when anti-craving medications are combined with some form of addiction counselling or community support.

Clinical considerations:

- It is safe to consume alcohol while taking acamprosate, although its benefits (relief of insomnia, dysphoria, and cravings) are only felt if the patient is abstinent.
- Monitor clients with depression closely for suicidal thoughts and attempts at initiation (rare).
- Acamprosate is renally cleared; monitor kidney function tests at baseline and one month after initiation. Reduce dose to 333mg three times daily if CrCl is 30–50ml/min. Avoid use if CrCL is <30ml/min.
- Acamprosate can be continued as long as it is effective and tolerated.

Given the consultative nature of our service, we will be transferring care and medication prescribing back to you.

- Current prescription: Acamprosate _____ mg [twice daily / three times daily]
- This prescription will end on _____ ; the client will require a renewal before then.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch with us if you require support in this transition or would benefit from further information. Rapid access addiction medicine (RAAM) clinics can be used for ongoing outpatient substance-related care.

The local RAAM clinic can be contacted at _____

Sincerely,

Phone: _____ Fax: _____