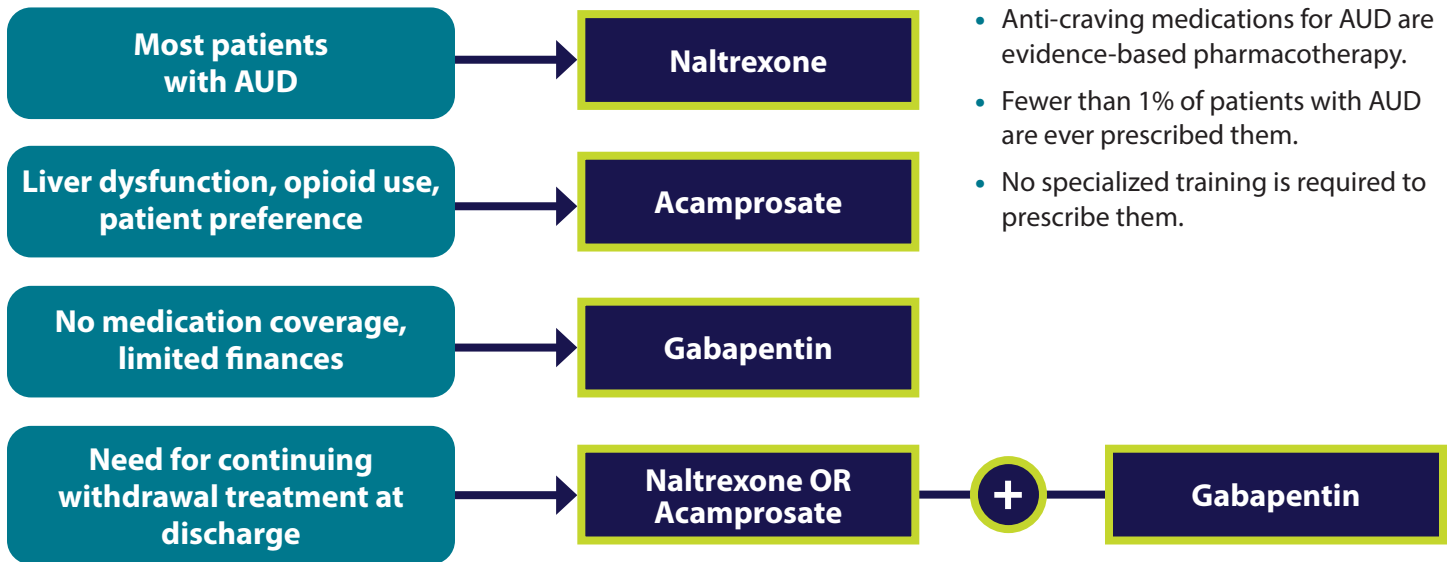


Choosing an Anti-Craving Medication



NALTREXONE

- Reduces drinking euphoria, promotes abstinence, reduces heavy drinking days.
- 50 mg PO once daily x 14 days, LU code 532

Contraindications: Taking opioids (it is a mu opioid antagonist and will precipitate withdrawal), known allergy, or acute hepatitis or liver failure (hepatic dysfunction, encephalopathy)

Usual side effect: Fatigue, headache, mild GI upset (settles over time)

ACAMPROSATE

- Relieves ongoing mild withdrawal symptoms (insomnia, dysphoria, cravings).
- Most effective when started a few days into abstinence.
- 666 mg PO three times daily x 14 days (333 mg if CrCl 30–50 ml/min), LU code 531

Contraindications: Severe renal impairment (CrCl < 30), known allergy, nursing

Usual side effect: Diarrhea (can start/stay on lower dose, but settles over time)

GABAPENTIN (off-label use)

- Relieves mild and/or ongoing withdrawal, promotes abstinence.
- Commonly prescribed with naltrexone or acamprosate.
- 300 mg PO three times daily x 14 days

Caution: Can cause sedation/dizziness. Higher risk when combined with other sedating medications/alcohol. Consider lower dose (100 mg PO three times daily) if elderly, on other sedating medications, or renal dysfunction.

CONSIDER A SPECIALIST CONSULT FOR PREGNANT PATIENTS TO DISCUSS THE RISKS AND BENEFITS OF TREATMENT WITH EACH OF THESE MEDICATIONS.