ACAMPROSATE
Patient Information Leaflet

(Before starting treatment, please read the manufacturers printed information leaflet from inside the medication pack).

What is it used for?
To reduce cravings for alcohol in patients who have stopped drinking, to help them stay off alcohol.

How does it work?
Acamprosate has a structure similar to chemical messengers (neurotransmitters) in the brain that work by blocking certain types of brain activity, and acamprosate is thought to boost these effects. These actions in the brain help to reduce your cravings for alcohol.

Acamprosate is only effective after you have completely stopped drinking alcohol and will be used alongside a counselling programme to help you stay off alcohol. It is important to realise that you still will need to use your own determination and willpower to avoid starting to drink again, and counselling will help with this.

How do I take it?
- Acamprosate tablets should be taken with or after food. The tablets should be swallowed whole with a drink of water. The tablets should not be not broken, chewed or crushed, as this can damage the special 'enteric coating' of the tablets.
- The usual dose for adults weighing 60kg or more is two tablets to be taken three times a day with meals.
- People who weigh under 60kg are usually prescribed four tablets per day – two taken with breakfast, one with lunch and one with the evening meal.
- Treatment with acamprosate tablets should be started as soon as possible after you have successfully stopped drinking alcohol and will usually be continued for one year.

Warning!
- It is important that this treatment is supported with counselling. This medicine is not a miracle cure that will stop you ever wanting to drink again. It will take time, support, willpower and determination to readjust to not drinking and learn to live without alcohol.
- This medicine does not relieve alcohol withdrawal symptoms and does not prevent the harmful effects of continued alcohol abuse.

- Continuing to drink alcohol while taking this medicine won't make you sick, but it will run the risk of making the treatment fail.

Side effects
Medicines and their possible side effects can affect individual people in different ways. The following are some of the side effects that are known to be associated with this medicine. Just because a side effect is stated here, it does not mean that all people using this medicine will experience that or any other side effect.

Very common (affect more than 1 in 10 people)
- Diarrhoea.

Common (affect between 1 in 10 and 1 in 100 people)
- Abdominal pain.
- Vomiting.
- Nausea.
- Flatulence.
- Skin rashes or itching.
- Decreased sex drive.

Uncommon (affect between 1 in 100 and 1 in 1000 people)
- Increased sex drive.

Very rare (affect less than 1 in 10,000 people)
- Allergic reactions such as severe skin rashes, anaphylaxis, or swelling of the lips, tongue and throat.

The side effects listed above may not include all of the side effects reported by the medicine's manufacturer.

For more information about any other possible risks associated with this medicine, please read the information provided with the medicine or consult your doctor or pharmacist.

How can this medicine affect other medicines?
It is important to tell your doctor or pharmacist what medicines you are already taking, including those bought without a prescription and herbal medicines, before you start treatment with this medicine. Similarly, check with your doctor or pharmacist before taking any new medicines while taking this one, to make sure that the combination is safe.

This medicine is not known to affect other medicines.