

The Carlat Psychiatry Report

CAMPRAL (acamprosate calcium) Fact Sheet

Manufacturer: Forest Laboratories; market exclusivity expires 2009.

Indications:

- Maintenance of abstinence from alcohol in patients with alcohol dependence who are already abstinent at treatment initiation.

Mechanism: Acamprosate interacts with the glutamate and GABA neurotransmitter systems, which may restore the normal balance between neuronal excitation and inhibition which is disturbed in alcoholism.

Dosing:

- Supplied as a 333 mg enteric-coated tablet.
- Start and maintain with two 333-mg tablets taken 3 times daily without regard to meals.
- In the patient with moderately compromised renal function maintain with one 333 mg tablet taken 3 times daily.

Side Effects:

- Common: Diarrhea.
- Uncommon but potentially dangerous: None documented

Drug-drug interactions:

- There are no significant drug-drug interactions

Pharmacokinetics:

- Acamprosate is excreted unchanged by the kidneys

Laboratory monitoring:

- Prior to initiation check renal function.

Pearls: Campral's efficacy is controversial. The largest comparative study of alcoholism treatments ever conducted (the COMBINE study) found that Campral was no more effective than placebo (*JAMA* 2006;295:2003-2017).