

Doctor Discussion Worksheet

For people struggling with alcohol use

Recovery from alcohol dependence may be possible.

For people seeking recovery, a combination of counseling, along with **medication that specifically treats alcohol dependence**, is recommended by organizations that focus on substance abuse issues.

You or your healthcare provider may feel that you need more than counseling support to manage your recovery. **If so, it may be time to consider treatment with medication as well.**

What should I know about medications for alcohol dependence?

Currently, there are 4 FDA-approved treatments for alcohol dependence. **Understanding a bit about them** can help you decide if this type of treatment may help you meet your recovery goals.

- **These medications don't cause your body to develop a tolerance**, which means you won't require more and more of the medication throughout your treatment
- **Medications to treat alcohol dependence are not new.** They have been available in the United States since 1951. The most recent was approved in 2006

Your goals are the starting point for your care plan.

It's important that you **share your recovery goals, lifestyle needs, and past experiences in recovery with your healthcare provider** so they can help you find a treatment that's appropriate for you.

Taking an active role in decision-making for your treatment can be important for your long-term recovery.

Always ask your provider about the potential benefits and risks of each treatment to help you make a choice that feels right for you.

Remember that relapse is common in addiction. If your treatment plan isn't working, talk to your healthcare provider about your options.

Addiction is a disease.

Drinking heavily can change how your brain works over time.

Medications for alcohol dependence can **address the effects of addiction on the brain.**

Avoiding relapse may be especially difficult at certain milestones and events:

- **3 months**
- **12 months**
- **Sporting events**
- **Holidays**

Understanding your priorities may help you and your provider decide on a medication.

Consider the following questions and discuss them with your healthcare provider.

Your recovery will look different from others' because it depends on your goals.

What are your goals for recovery?

Have you tried to reduce or stop drinking in the past? If so, what got in the way of your success?

What commitments have you made to stick with your recovery?

What factors do you think might influence whether or not you keep taking medication on time and as prescribed?

Have you been treated with medication to help with your recovery in the past? If so, what kind(s)? What do you think worked or didn't work for you?

How open are you about your recovery with the people in your life?

Would you consider therapy or a support program to help you stick to your treatment plan?

What do I need to know about medications?

Not all medications are the same. They work differently, and each has their own side effects.

Your healthcare provider can tell you more about what options may be appropriate for you.

Taking medication as instructed by your healthcare provider can be an important factor for treatment.

Consider which type of dosing would work best for you, and discuss with your healthcare provider.

There are oral medications and an injectable medication. The dosing varies from daily to once a month.

Choosing a treatment plan that you can stick with may help you have the recovery you're hoping for.