



# Alcohol Use Disorder

## Diagnosis and Treatment

Perform an Alcohol screen in any patient presenting with cirrhosis, even if they are known to have excessive intake. Having an objective score to present to the patient can be a helpful starting point for a discussion around alcohol use.

Perform the AUDIT-C alcohol screen (3 questions)

[AUDIT-C Calculator](#)

A high risk score (>2 in Females, >3 in Males) suggests hazardous drinking

### Tips for starting a brief intervention and what resources to provide

- Provide locale specific resources for inpatient or outpatient addiction assessment services
- For outpatient addiction assessment services in Alberta, call 811 or 1.866.332.2322

[Brief intervention conversation using motivational interviewing skills](#)

Does the patient meet DSM-5 criteria for mild, moderate, or severe AUD?

[DSM-5 Criteria](#)

### Mild AUD (2-3 criteria)

- While AUD relapse prevention medications are not well studied in Mild AUD they can still be considered alongside multidisciplinary psychosocial support if there is a high motivation to cease drinking or cravings for alcohol use are present

### Moderate/Severe AUD (≥4 criteria)

- Consider relapse prevention medications alongside multidisciplinary psychosocial support to reduce the risk of subsequent alcohol use.

### Relapse prevention medications

- There is **limited cirrhosis specific data** for relapse prevention medications for AUD in cirrhosis. Acamprosate is the **preferred agent** with alternatives being baclofen or gabapentin
- Dosing, side effects and cautions for these medications are presented in the **AUD pharmacotherapy table**.
- Consult Addiction management teams if available.
- If pharmacotherapy is initiated in hospital, **provide enough medication** until the time the patient can be seen by primary/specialty care in follow-up. These medications can be continued for 12 months or longer if a patient demonstrates continued benefit.

[Link to the AUD pharmacotherapy table](#)

- See the Alcohol Associated Hepatitis page for more information about that diagnosis (if applicable)

[See the Alcohol Associated Hepatitis page](#)

- Short to intermediate acting benzodiazepines (e.g. lorazepam) are safer in the setting of poor liver function

[See the AHS alcohol withdrawal adult inpatient orders set](#)