

Injectable alcoholism drug developed

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A U.S. biotech firm has reportedly developed a monthly injectable alcoholism treatment as a substitute for a daily pill.

The drug -- being marketed by Cephalon Inc., in Frazer, Pa. -- was developed by Alkermes Inc. of Cambridge, Mass., as an extended-release injection form of naltrexone.

The new drug, Vivitrol, works by blocking neurotransmitters believed to be associated with alcohol dependence, diminishing the craving for alcohol, the Philadelphia Inquirer reported Tuesday.

Vivitrol has been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for use by adults able to abstain from drinking alcohol in an outpatient setting, and who are not actively drinking when they begin treatment.

The monthly intramuscular shot will cost \$695, with Alkermes and Cephalon sharing profits from Vivitrol sales, as well as developing future commercial uses, possibly to treat other addictions.

Researchers told the Inquirer Vivitrol will be administered only by healthcare personnel in offices, hospitals, and clinics, and the treatment will include counseling.

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