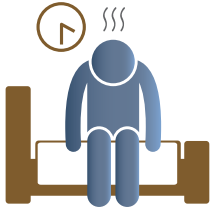


# Slowly Stopping Benzodiazepines

## Your benzodiazepine may not be helping as much as you think!

Many people who take benzodiazepines (e.g., Alprazolam [Xanax®], Diazepam [Valium®], Lorazepam [Ativan®]) get used to the medicine. As a result, when a dose is skipped or lowered, anxiety and sleep problems can get worse. **Tapering** is a way to slowly reduce your dose to help prevent withdrawal symptoms.

### Possible risks of benzodiazepines:



Feel tired or drowsy



Problems with memory and thinking



Depression, mood changes, irritability, anger



Worsening of PTSD symptoms



- Become dependent on the medicine
- Withdrawal symptoms



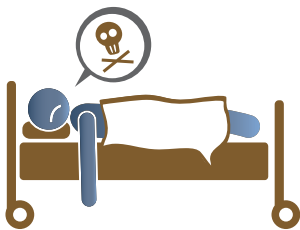
- Worsening of COPD and sleep apnea
- Pneumonia



- Car crash
- Arrest for driving while impaired



- Unsteady walking
- Falls, broken bones, or concussion



Overdose—especially when combined with alcohol, strong pain medicine (opioids), non-prescribed medicines



- Birth defects
- Withdrawal symptoms in newborn



### The key to success

The best way to reduce or stop benzodiazepines is to work with your provider to very slowly decrease your dose. This may take months, but it is the safest approach.

**Withdrawal symptoms are temporary. In time, you will have more energy, a clearer mind, and sleep better.**

**Possible signs of benzodiazepine withdrawal:**

**Common symptoms**

- Trouble sleeping / nightmares
- Anxious / irritable
- Muscle stiffness
- Flu-like symptoms
- Numbness or tingling
- Stomach upset






**Less common symptoms**

- Feeling that you are not really in your body
- Memory problems

**Rare symptoms**

- See or hear things that are not really there
- Seizures

**Tips for successfully stopping your benzodiazepines:**

-  Work with your provider and report symptoms of withdrawal.
-  Ask for support from friends and family.
-  Use relaxation techniques such as meditation, deep breathing, or yoga.
-  Develop a routine around bedtime to make falling and staying asleep easier.
-  Limit caffeine and alcohol.



**Do not stop taking any medicine without first speaking to your provider.**

**Tapering schedule:**

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Please call \_\_\_\_\_ with any questions or concerns.



**Veterans Crisis Line: 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or Text 838255**