

I Seek Your Guidance and Support

I would like to discuss my benzodiazepine prescription with you. I am concerned:

1. That I will be on these drugs for the rest of my life
2. About dependence, tolerance, and withdrawal
3. About tapering too quickly
4. That even with your oversight, I might not be permitted to take an active role in managing my withdrawal

I want to talk to you about evidence-based research which indicates:

1. Even at low dosages, physiologic dependence may develop in as little as 2-4 weeks¹
2. After 4 weeks of use, nearly half of patients will experience withdrawal upon cessation^{2,3}
3. 15-44% experience moderate to severe symptoms upon withdrawal³
4. Withdrawal symptoms can appear peculiar, such as light and sound sensitivity⁴
5. Abrupt withdrawal is dangerous and more likely to result in a failed attempt at withdrawal⁵
6. Withdrawal symptoms can fluctuate dramatically⁵
7. 10-15% of patients experience symptoms of withdrawal months to years after completion of their taper⁶

*I have read the **Benzodiazepine Withdrawal Manual** by Prof. C. Heather Ashton, who worked both as a General Practitioner and pharmacologist within the British NHS, and operated her own benzodiazepine withdrawal clinic for a number of years. I found it highly informative.*

I seek your help with:

1. Planning a withdrawal plan which acknowledges that a patient-led withdrawal is usually more successful
2. An initial slow taper rate so that we can better determine what is a manageable taper plan for me
3. A plan which is flexible, so that we can decide together when I am ready to make a new reduction to my dose
4. Continued support in providing prescriptions so that I might complete my taper in a safe and manageable manner

Thank you for your patience and help

References

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- 4 Lader M. Withdrawing Benzodiazepines in Patients With Anxiety Disorders. *Curr. Psychiatry Rep*. 2016 Jan;18(1):8. **Abstract**
- 5 Ashton H. "Benzodiazepines: How They Work and How to Withdraw". 2002
- 6 Ashton H. Protracted withdrawal syndromes from benzodiazepines, *J of Substance Abuse Trtmt*, Vol 8, #1-2, 1991, P19-28, **Abstract**

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