

# Medication Change: Benzodiazepine

Patient's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Your health care provider has talked with you about changes to your medicine. Here is more information to help you understand the changes.

## What is a benzodiazepine?

Benzodiazepines (ben-zo-di-az-eh-peens) are sometimes called "benzos." A benzodiazepine is a medicine given by your health care provider to help you:

- Relax
- Go to sleep
- Not panic as much

## Common benzodiazepine medicines are:

- Xanax (alprazolam)
- Ativan (lorazepam)
- Klonopin (clonazepam)
- Restoril (temazepam)
- Valium (diazepam)
- Serax (oxazepam)

## Why is my medicine being lowered or stopped?

How long you take a benzodiazepine depends on why you are taking it. It may stop helping you if it is used for a long time. It may even cause harm to your body. Some people may become addicted to the medicine. Addiction means that your body craves the medicine even when you don't need it.

Benzodiazepines can cause other problems. These problems are called side effects. Side effects may make it hard to do the things you do every day. Some side effects of benzodiazepines are:

- Feeling sleepy
- Trouble falling asleep
- Trouble remembering
- Feeling dizzy

## Call 911 or go to the nearest hospital immediately if you:

- Have chest pain
- Have trouble breathing
- Have a seizure
- Pass out
- Have sudden trouble seeing or hearing

## Call your health care provider before your next visit if you:

- Have withdrawal for more than three days
- Have diarrhea for more than one day
- Have an upset stomach for more than one day
- Throw up for more than one day
- Twitch or shake

## What is the change to my medicine?

A change in your medicine is being made to help keep you healthy and safe. The change is:

- You will keep taking this medicine, but **take less** of it. It is safer for you to take less of your medicine. Use the schedule on the back to make this change safely.
- You will **stop** taking this medicine. The medicine may have stopped helping you. It may not be safe for you to keep taking this medicine. **Do not stop taking your medicine all at once.** Use the schedule on the back to make this change safely.

## How will I take less of or stop taking my medicine?

The amount of medicine you take is called a dose. Taking less medicine over time is called tapering. Your medicine will be tapered until you reach your new dose or until you do not take your medicine anymore. Use the schedule on the back to make this change safely. Your health care provider will fill it out with you.

## What happens when I take less of my medicine?

When you take less of your medicine, you might feel different. This is sometimes called withdrawal. You might:

- Feel sleepy or very awake
- Feel like throwing up
- Have an upset stomach
- Feel dizzy
- Feel grouchy
- Feel sweaty
- Have diarrhea
- Feel like crying
- Have a headache
- Have a faster heartbeat
- "Crave" the medicine

Withdrawal usually goes away within a few days. You should get plenty of rest, drink water, and eat well. If you have any questions about your medication change, please call your health care provider.

## Your health care provider's phone number is:

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See reverse for your medication change schedule.

For help finding substance abuse or mental health care in your area, please call **800-662-HELP (4357)**.

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