



How to begin tapering off benzodiazepines

What is a benzodiazepine?

Benzodiazepines (ben-zoh-die-az-uh-peens) or “benzos” are a type of sedative. They are often used for sleep, or to treat anxiety or muscle spasms. They have other, less common uses too.

Are benzodiazepines safe for me?

Like all medications, benzos have risks. You may feel sleepy, dizzy, clumsy, or confused. This can cause falls or accidents. Other effects include a

hangover feeling if you take a benzo at bedtime. This can affect driving or other tasks in the morning. Over time, your benzo might not work as well as it once did.

What else can I take for sleep?

There may be options for treating your condition that are better for you than a benzo. These options may or may not be a medication. For example, there are things you can do to help

sleep, anxiety, and low back pain that do not involve pills. Ask your prescriber about these options.

WEEKS	TAPERING SCHEDULE							✓
	MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA	SU	
1 and 2	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
3 and 4	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
5 and 6	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
7 and 8	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
9 and 10	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
11 and 12	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
13 and 14	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
15 and 16	X	●	X	X	●	X	●	
17 and 18	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	

I am ready to stop my benzodiazepine. How do I start?

Discuss discontinuing your benzo with your provider. Sudden discontinuation of benzos are not recommended as you may experience withdrawal symptoms. Examples include: anxiety, irritability, trouble sleeping, shaking, muscle aches or cramps, or upset stomach.

Make sure your condition is monitored by your prescriber before stopping the benzo. Tapering benzos might take weeks or months. Your prescriber will give you specific advice for the taper. If you feel worse during this process, don't be discouraged. Contact your prescriber and follow their advice.

EXPLANATIONS

● Full Dose ● Half dose ● Quarter of a dose X No dose