



Here are some important tips for reducing medication:

- It's important to never reduce or discontinue medication on our own. Reducing medication does not always mean stopping medication all together. Always talk with the doctor first to make a plan.
- If the doctor is not on board with reducing medication, we can always bring up the topic again later or we can find a new doctor.
- There can be risks to reducing medication. For instance, sometimes symptoms return. That's why it's important to talk with the doctor about the pros *AND* cons of reducing medication.
- It helps to learn what to expect when reducing medication. Be sure to ask the doctor about withdrawal symptoms.
- Reducing or stopping medication “cold turkey” can be dangerous to our health. Slow, gradual reduction will give us the best chance for success.
- We can work with the doctor to make our unique plan for reducing medication.
- When our medications are being reduced, it's important to drink plenty of water, eat healthy food and get exercise.
- When reducing medication, go slow. It will take time for our body to adjust to lower doses of medication.
- We should avoid the use of street drugs and alcohol during medication reduction.
- Many of us find it's best not to reduce medication when we are doing something new or important like going back to school, celebrating holidays, getting married or getting a job. Keeping things the same during reduction is the best idea.
- Anticipate feeling strong emotions. Many psychiatric medications dull emotions. If we have been on them for a long time, we may have forgotten how intense emotions can be.
- Most of us need support from friends and family during medication reduction. Sharing our plan to reduce meds with the people who support us, is a good idea.
- It also makes sense to see the doctor more often during the period of medication reduction.
- In case something comes up, it's good to have our doctor's phone number so we can be in touch.
- It is relatively easy to reduce medication. It is more challenging to reduce meds *AND* stay healthy. As medication is decreased, we can increase our skills at managing symptoms in other ways. A peer specialist, our doctor and our therapist will be able to help us learn new skills.
- On the journey to reduce medication, we may have to increase the dose back up at times. That's not failure. We can think of it as pressing the pause button and taking time to increase our skills at managing our mental health challenges.
- Sometimes we don't succeed on the first effort. That's OK. We can always try again at a later time.