

TEMPLATE Patient Letter: Invitation to try dose reduction

(use with accompanying patient information leaflet “How to withdraw from benzodiazepines and hypnotics after long term use”)

Dear Patient

In line with best clinical practice and local guidelines we regularly review the medicines we prescribe. I note from our records that you have been prescribed tablets which is called a hypnotic / benzodiazepine *(delete as applicable)*.

We are writing to you because there have been increasing concerns about these tablets, particularly when taken in higher doses over a long period of time. These medicines used to be commonly prescribed but national safety agencies now say they should not be used for more than 4 weeks because of potential serious side effects which are more fully explained in the accompanying leaflet.

Although the greatest association with side effects was found with higher doses and long-term use, it has been shown that even when taken occasionally or intermittently, patients are still at risk.

Our aim is to help you become less reliant on the tablets and to reduce the amount you are taking, with the possibility of stopping completely at a future date. **Stopping suddenly may lead to unpleasant withdrawal symptoms, but when reduced gradually over time in a controlled way, patients of all ages have been successful in reducing the dose of their tablets with few noticeable effects.**

Please be reassured you will not be pressured into making any changes unless you are ready. Our aim is to involve you in your own healthcare decisions and to support you in any changes you decide to make. If you would like our support or wish to discuss this further before attempting any reduction, please make a non-urgent appointment withat the practice. The practice also has a **range of leaflets** which can provide you with more information.

If you decide to try a reduction, please follow the instructions in the accompanying leaflet and don't forget to let your GP know if you have been successful!

Yours sincerely