

What is Tapering?

Tapering means to reduce opioid dosage over time.

Opioids can be an important part of treatment for your pain management, but they come with serious side effects and risks. If your healthcare provider thinks the risks of opioids outweigh the benefits, they may recommend tapering. Learn more about tapering so you may have an informed conversation with your healthcare provider about this process.

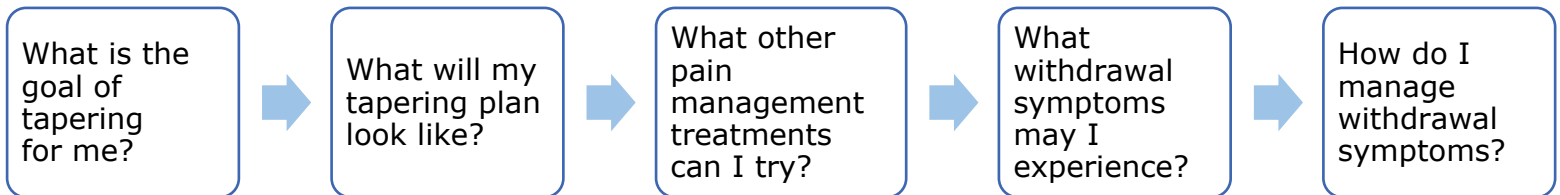
Reasons Why Opioids May be Tapered:

- ✓ Your pain and function have not improved over time.¹
- ✓ You start another medicine that increases risk for bad side effects with opioids.¹
- ✓ You have bad side effects that make it harder to safely do everyday tasks.¹
- ✓ You request a lower dose or wish to stop taking opioids.²
- ✓ You show signs of opioid addiction (e.g. difficulty controlling use).²
- ✓ You have experienced an overdose or show early warning signs of addiction.²

Facts About Tapering and Best Practices:

- ✓ The goal is to minimize increases in your pain and signs of withdrawal.
- ✓ Early withdrawal symptoms (e.g. anxiety, muscle aches) usually go away after 5-10 days but may take longer.¹
- ✓ It can take as little as a week to lose tolerance to your original opioid dose. There is a risk of overdose if you suddenly return to your original opioid dose. Never take more than prescribed.¹
- ✓ Common tapering may involve dose reductions of 5% to 20% every four weeks.¹
- ✓ Some symptoms (e.g. feelings of uneasiness, trouble sleeping, irritability) can take weeks or months to go away.¹
- ✓ Talk to your healthcare provider. Tapering may need to pause and restart again. Pauses may allow you to learn new pain and stress management skills and get used to your lower opioid dose.¹

Tapering Questions to Ask Your Healthcare Provider:



Find More Information + Education:

Go to bit.ly/patientadvocacyPA

¹ Visit bit.ly/HHStapering to view the Guide for Appropriate Tapering or Discontinuation of Long-Term Opioid Use, published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

² Visit bit.ly/CDCtaperingguide to view the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Pocket Guide: Tapering Opioids for Chronic Pain.



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