

## Information for pharmacists: Tapering and stopping antidepressants

Dear Pharmacist,

Thank you for supporting this patient who has decided, together with their doctor, to reduce and stop their antidepressant via slow hyperbolic tapering of antidepressant dose.

Slow hyperbolic tapering helps to minimise antidepressant withdrawal symptoms, enabling people to successfully stop antidepressants. This approach is now recommended in clinical guidelines internationally ([www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mental-health/treatments-and-wellbeing/stopping-antidepressants](http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mental-health/treatments-and-wellbeing/stopping-antidepressants)).

Slow hyperbolic tapering involves reducing antidepressant dose in smaller and smaller reductions at lower and lower doses: At lower, go slower. For example, hyperbolic tapering of sertraline could be 100mg–50mg–25mg–12.5mg–9mg–6mg–4mg–2mg–1mg–STOP ('faster' taper) or 100mg-75mg-50mg-37.5mg-30mg-25mg-20mg-15mg-12.5mg-10mg-8mg-6mg-5mg-4mg-3mg-2.5mg-2mg-1.5mg-1mg-0.5mg-STOP ('slower' taper), with dose reductions every 2-4 weeks.

***It is very important that patients do not to skip a day or alternate doses, and that they do not to miss the final small reductions. The smaller doses have a disproportionately large effect on suppressing withdrawal symptoms.***

Hyperbolic tapering uses antidepressant mini doses that are not readily available commercially. Off-label options include compounded mini dose capsules on prescription via a compounding pharmacist; portions of tablets made by cutting, shaving or filing tablets; or dilute suspensions made using liquid formulations (if available) or by crushing and mixing tablets in water or juice. Pharmaceutical guidance advises that antidepressant tablets can be crushed and dispersed in water for administration (UK NEWT guidelines, NHS pharmaceutical guidance – [www.sps.nhs.uk/articles/ssri-suggestions-for-adults-with-swallowing-difficulties/](http://www.sps.nhs.uk/articles/ssri-suggestions-for-adults-with-swallowing-difficulties/)).

For further information about antidepressant withdrawal symptoms and stopping antidepressants by hyperbolic tapering of drug dose please see: [www.releasetoolkit.com.au](http://www.releasetoolkit.com.au)

Kind regards,  
Patient and Doctor