**Tips and tricks for psychotropic drug withdrawal**

Drug withdrawal often requires that you take less than one tablet or capsule. How do you do that?

You can always consult your pharmacy about whether your drug can be split into smaller units. Here are a few main rules:

**Warning: The box and the package insert will always describe your type of medicine. If the pills are enteric coated tablets or enteric coated capsules, they must not be split under any circumstances. Enteric coated tablets and capsules are manufactured in such a way that the active ingredient is not exposed to the gastric acid, and if they are split, the active ingredient will come into contact with the gastric acid and will be destroyed.**

**Tablets**

Most tablets are regular tablets, and the active ingredient is evenly distributed throughout the tablet.

If a groove runs across the surface of the tablet, it is easy to split the tablet. This will allow you to get half tablets. Tablets can also be split into four and eight parts, which is sometimes necessary towards the end of the withdrawal period.

Tablets can be cut with a sharp knife, but you can also buy a tablet splitter or a tablet guillotine at the pharmacy.

It is also possible to split the tablets into uneven sizes and place them according to tablet size, starting the withdrawal with the largest sizes and ending with the smallest.

If there is no groove, tablets can in some cases be split anyway. But you should consult your pharmacy.

**Sustained-release tablets**

Some tablets are designed to remain in the body for a long time, and they are often manufactured in a way that allows the active ingredient to be distributed throughout the body gradually. These tablets have an addition to their name, for example depot, prolonged-release, and retard. Basically, they cannot be split.

If the sustained-release tablet has a groove, you should break the tablet along it, but do not split the tablet more than once.

Many drugs are available as sustained-release tablets or non-sustained-release tablets, and if you need to split a sustained-release tablet, consult your doctor to switch to regular tablets.

**Capsules**

Capsules are made of gelatine with the purpose of assembling the powder. Therefore, they can be split and the powder can be dissolved in water. The water will be unclear, but ready to drink. It is possible to prepare the water solution in a plastic syringe with ml divisions, and from this solution you can draw the correct amount equivalent to the dose needed. Calculation is necessary.

Use a 10 ml syringe, add powder to the syringe and draw water up to the 10 ml line. Turn the syringe upside down or shake it a few times to dissolve the powder. 1 ml corresponds to 10%, 2 ml to 20%, etc. Pour the required contents into a glass and drink it.

**Sustained-release capsules**

Some capsules (sustained-release capsules) contain large particles or mini-tablets intended to be released slowly in the body over a long period of time. In most cases, these capsules can be broken and part of the content sprinkled on yogurt or dissolved in water with a syringe as mentioned above.

**Replacing medicine to enable drug withdrawal**

In some cases, drug withdrawal is not possible with the prescribed drug, simply because the tablet cannot be split or the capsule content reduced. You may therefore have to replace your drug with another one with identical effect, available in lower strengths. You will have to consult your doctor to do so.

**Who is responsible?**

Basically, you are responsible for your own medicine and your drug withdrawal. This also applies if you take the medicine differently than prescribed by your doctor.

If you have a proposal for a drug withdrawal plan, it is your responsibility to have the plan approved by or discussed with your doctor.

If you replace your prescribed medicine with another drug, this should preferably be done in cooperation with your doctor.

If your doctor disagrees with your wish to withdraw from psychiatric drugs, then find another doctor or a drug withdrawal therapist who is able to help you.

The pharmacy can advise you on how to split tablets and capsule contents.

We prepared this guide but do not assume any responsibility in relation to your medicine or how you take it. You are responsible for your medicine and how you take it.

This folder was prepared by the pharmacists Bertel Rüdinger and Birgit Signora Toft. Copenhagen, 27 June 2017.

Tips and tricks

for withdrawal of psychotropic drugs

**Neuroleptics (incl. lithium)**(for mania, psychoses and hallucinations)

**Sedatives and sleeping tablets**  
(for anxiety and insomnia)

**Depression pills**(for anxiety and depression)

**Speed-like drugs**  
(for ADHD)

**Epilepsy drugs**(for anxiety and bipolar disorder)