

# What to expect

You might notice some changes each time you reduce your tablets. You might have slightly more pain or feel flu like symptoms:



Diarrhoea



Chills



Vomiting



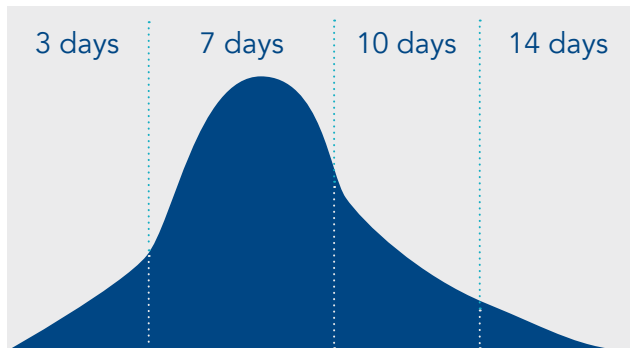
Anxious or Irritable



Sweating

**Withdrawal symptoms each time you reduce a tablet are normal.**

**They will ease after 7-14 days.**



For information on withdrawal symptoms or living with long term pain go to [www.livewellwithpain.co.uk](http://www.livewellwithpain.co.uk)

Thanks to Thistle and Midlothian Health and Social Care for developing the leaflet.

If you wish to print this leaflet, if possible change your printer settings to print it double sided on a single page.

# Codeine: More harm than good?

Scientists have asked doctors to change the way they treat patients with long term pain.

They say there is "little or no evidence" that Codeine helps in the long term and its side effects can be more distressing than the pain.

## Is Codeine still helping me?

Most people get used to Codeine after a few weeks. Even if it helped when you started taking it, it might not be helping any more. It might be causing harmful unwanted side effects.

## Should I stop taking it?

The only way to tell if Codeine is still helping is to try taking a little less - and see if you notice a change in your pain. Use the guide inside to reduce your tablets safely.

## What else can I do for my pain?

As well as trying to reduce Codeine you can try other lifestyle changes such as being more active or practicing relaxation.

See NHS inform chronic pain section at

[www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/brain-nerves-and-spinal-cord/chronic-pain/](http://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/brain-nerves-and-spinal-cord/chronic-pain/)

## Benefits of reducing Codeine

As you reduce your dose you may notice a reduction in its side effects.

- Better control of pain
- More able to fight infection
- Thinking more clearly
- Managing your emotions
- Feeling less tired
- Maintaining a healthy weight
- Easier to go to the toilet
- Less difficulty having sex



























## What do I do now?

If you want to try to reduce your tablets you don't need to see a GP. You can follow the guide inside this leaflet. If you would like advice or support in reducing your medication please speak to your GP or Pharmacist.

# My 6 month plan

## Keep a note of how you are feeling and any withdrawal symptoms.

This could relate to for example, how you are sleeping, how it is affecting your pain and mood and how confident you are feeling.

AM	Lunch	PM	Night	Date	How I feel
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### Go Slow.



- Take one less tablet every month.
- Do not stop in one go.

### Stop if your pain gets too bad.



- If your pain is too bad go back to the level above.
- Try some self management strategies at [www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/brain-nerves-and-spinal-cord/chronic-pain/](http://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/brain-nerves-and-spinal-cord/chronic-pain/)
- Speak to your Pharmacist or GP for advice

### You may feel poorly.



- You may feel flu like symptoms for a few days each time you reduce your tablets.
- Do not increase your dose - you should feel better after a few days.

### Talk to someone.



- Please speak to a Pharmacist or your GP.