

Dihydrocodeine

More harm than good?



Doctors have been asked to change the way they treat patients with long term pain.

Scientists say "little or no evidence" that Dihydrocodeine helps in the long term, and that sometimes its side effects can be more distressing than the pain.

Is Dihydrocodeine still helping me?

Many people find that their body gets used to Dihydrocodeine after a few weeks. Even if it helped when you started taking it, it might not be helping any more, and it may be causing harmful, unwanted side effects.

Should I stop taking it?

One way to find out if Dihydrocodeine is still helping, is to try taking less of the medication - and see if you notice a change in your pain. Use the guide here to reduce your tablets safely.

What else can I do for my pain?

As well as trying to reduce Dihydrocodeine you can try other lifestyle changes such as being more active or practicing relaxation. See NHS inform chronic pain section at nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/brain-nerves-and-spinal-cord/chronic-pain/

Benefits of reducing Dihydrocodeine

As you reduce your dose you may notice fewer 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 do not need to see a GP. You can follow the guide inside your leaflet. If you would like advice or support in reducing your medication, please speak to your GP or Pharmacist.

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

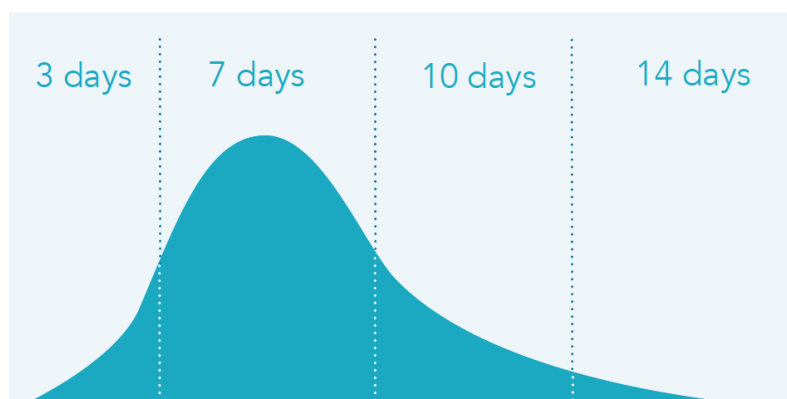


Anxious or
irritable



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 livewellwithpain.co.uk

You can find more information and support about living with chronic pain on the NHS Inform website. Visit the NHS Inform Chronic Pain webpage using the web link provided, or scan the QR code to access the page on your phone or tablet.



www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/brain-nerves-and-spinal-cord/chronic-pain/living-with-chronic-pain/

With thanks to Thistle and Midlothian Health and Social Care for developing this leaflet and NHS Fife for their kind permission to reproduce these as national leaflets.

NHS
SCOTLAND

mi • 353230 v1.0

My 6 month plan



Go slow

- Reduce your daily dose by one 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 nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/brain-nerves-and-spinal-cord/chronic-pain/
- Speak to your Pharmacy Team 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 GP

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
					
					
					
					
					
					
					
					