## DEPRESCRIBING: REDUCING MEDICATIONS SAFELY TO MEET LIFE'S CHANGES

## FOCUS ON BENZODIAZEPINE RECEPTOR AGONISTS & Z-DRUGS (BZRAs)



As life changes, your medication needs may change as well. Medications that were once good for you, may not be the best choice for you now.

**Deprescribing** is a way for health care providers to help you safely cut back on medications.

## WHAT ARE BENZODIAZEPINE RECEPTOR AGONISTS & Z-DRUGS?

• Drugs used to treat problems like anxiety or difficulty sleeping



- Examples include:
  - Alprazolam (Xanax<sup>®</sup>)
  - Bromazepam (Lectopam<sup>®</sup>)
  - Chlordiazepoxide (Librax<sup>®</sup>)
  - Clonazepam (Rivotril<sup>®</sup>)
  - Clorazepate (Tranxene<sup>®</sup>)
- Diazepam (Valium<sup>®</sup>)
- Flurazepam (Dalmane®)
- Lorazepam (Ativan<sup>®</sup>)
- Nitrazepam (Mogadon<sup>®</sup>)
- Oxazepam (Serax<sup>®</sup>)
- Temazepam (Restoril<sup>®</sup>)
- Triazolam (Halcion<sup>®</sup>)
- Zopiclone (Imovane<sup>®</sup>, Rhovane<sup>®</sup>)
- Zolpidem (Sublinox<sup>®</sup>)
- WHY CONSIDER REDUCING OR STOPPING A BZRA BEING USED FOR INSOMNIA?



 BZRAs can cause dependence, memory problems, daytime fatigue, and are linked to dementia and falls



 Many could take them for short periods (up to <u>4 weeks</u>) but remain on them for years



 BZRAs are not recommended at all (regardless of duration) in older persons as first line therapy for insomnia



• BZRAs may become less helpful for sleep after only a few weeks

## HOW TO SAFELY REDUCE OR STOP A BZRA



• Ask your health care provider to find out if deprescribing is for you; BZRA doses should be reduced slowly with supervision



- Tell your health care provider about the BZRA deprescribing algorithm, available online: <u>http://deprescribing.org/resources/deprescribing-guidelines-algorithms/</u>
- Download the BZRA patient information pamphlet available online: <u>http://deprescribing.org/resources/deprescribing-information-pamphlets/</u>

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Pottie K, Thompson W, Davies S, Grenier J, Sadowski C, Welch V, Holbrook A, Boyd C, Swenson JR, Ma A, Farrell B. Evidence-based clinical practice guideline for deprescribing benzodiazepine receptor agonists. *Can Fam Physician* 2018;64:339-51 (Eng), e209-24 (Fr)