

Dangers of Tapering off an SSRI

There is little to no information on **Protracted Withdrawal** from SSRIs. One may find information on Protracted Withdrawal for other drugs, such as benzodiazepines [ie: Xanax and Valium], but almost nothing on this subject as it relates to Antidepressants.

That said, the information provided here is based on personal experience with this type of withdrawal from past failed attempts at getting off an SSRI.

Protracted Withdrawal is the time period that begins once one has finished tapering off an SSRI - they are no longer ingesting the drug but it is stored in the body's fat cells as SSRIs are fat-soluble drugs. We have no way of knowing when this condition ends because many are known to experience "drug pockets" where the drug which has been stored in the body, releases - due to exercise, weight loss, sweating, or a number of other reasons including the body's own nature to expel that which is unnatural and toxic. This appears to be a reason that these drugs can be so difficult to taper off.

Additionally, there is seemingly no research available on the subject of SSRIs being fat-soluble drugs, [see right for description]. It seems that psychotropic drugs are fat soluble in order for them to pass through the blood-brain barrier.

.What we know is that most street-drugs [ie: heroin and cocaine] are water-soluble. Hence, one can go in to a Detox Center and be taken off these drugs in a matter of a few days. This is NOT possible with an SSRI because the drug stores in the fat and takes months to release out of the body.

There is also speculation that SSRIs disable the body from being able to work properly and need time to heal. Since there is no research on this, we can only suggest that SSRIs "affect multiple systems throughout the body. The body has to reawaken functions that it had not used for a long time, and also it has to tone down certain functions that had been increased to compensate for the medication's dampening effects. All of these adjustments have their own timeline, can be "protracted," and are connected to the progress of withdrawal over time." [3]

Protracted Withdrawal can be extremely dangerous if one is not properly prepared, often leading the one in withdrawal to have to go back on the SSRI to stabilize and typically, it is at a higher dose than before coming off the drug.

This is the reason that not ONE facility exists in this country [or any other countries] for one to go and detox off of an SSRI. It would take too long. There would be no 28-day stay... 28-days would be just the beginning for a taper off an SSRI...

[3] Dr. Alice W. Lee-Bloem, MD, www.holisticpsychiatrist.com

Symptoms of Protracted Withdrawal

Akathisia (anxiety, nervousness, agitation, suicidal thoughts), Panic, Paresthesia/Burning sensation on the torso and extremities, Inability to think straight, Feeling as if one is going to die, Wanting to die, Feeling as there is no way out, Feeling as if this will never end, Flu-like symptoms, Aching bones, Head swooshing, Brain Zaps, Disequilibrium, Terror,

Insomnia, Headache, Night Sweats, Nightmares, Hot Flashes, Dizziness, Fatigue, Exhaustion, Increased sweating, Decreased appetite and weight loss, Intraocular pressure or blurred vision, Disturbances of the gut, such as nausea, constipation, diarrhea, indigestion, vomiting, Tremor, Heart palpitations, Hot flashes, Taste disturbances, Dysphoria, Increase in blood pressure or heart rate, Cold hands or feet, Depersonalization, Myoclonus (involuntary muscle twitching), Tinnitus, Extreme yawning, feeling of lack of oxygen, Extreme sensitivity to light... and more...

Do NOT abruptly stop taking a SSRI for this can be extremely dangerous. The time when dosing is adjusted - up or down - is the time when most SSRI-induced suicides and homicides occur. [4]

Careful steps must be taken to assure your safe arrival off an Antidepressant.