

Insert practice name and/or letterhead

Address

Date

Dear [Patient name]

I am writing to you because I note from my records that you have been taking <medication> for some time now. Recently, doctors have become concerned about this kind of sedative-hypnotic medication (also known as sleeping pills) when it is taken over long periods.

Using these medications over a long period is no longer recommended because scientific research has shown that they can lead to harmful side effects, including falls and fractures, memory and sleep problems, and they can be addictive. In other words, the body can get used to these tablets so that they no longer work properly.

I am writing to ask you to consider cutting down your dose of these tablets and perhaps stopping them completely at some time in the future. As each person is different, I would like to discuss this with you in person within the next 3 months.

Stopping sleeping pills suddenly can cause unpleasant withdrawal side effects. To avoid this, we can discuss a gradual tapering protocol that will reduce your dose very slowly. Once you start to reduce your dose, you may be able to think about stopping them altogether. We can also help put in place non-drug therapies to help you sleep, which have been proven safer and also more effective.

If you would like to talk to me personally about this, I would be pleased to meet with you at a mutually convenient time.

Yours sincerely,

<signature of patient's own General Practitioner>