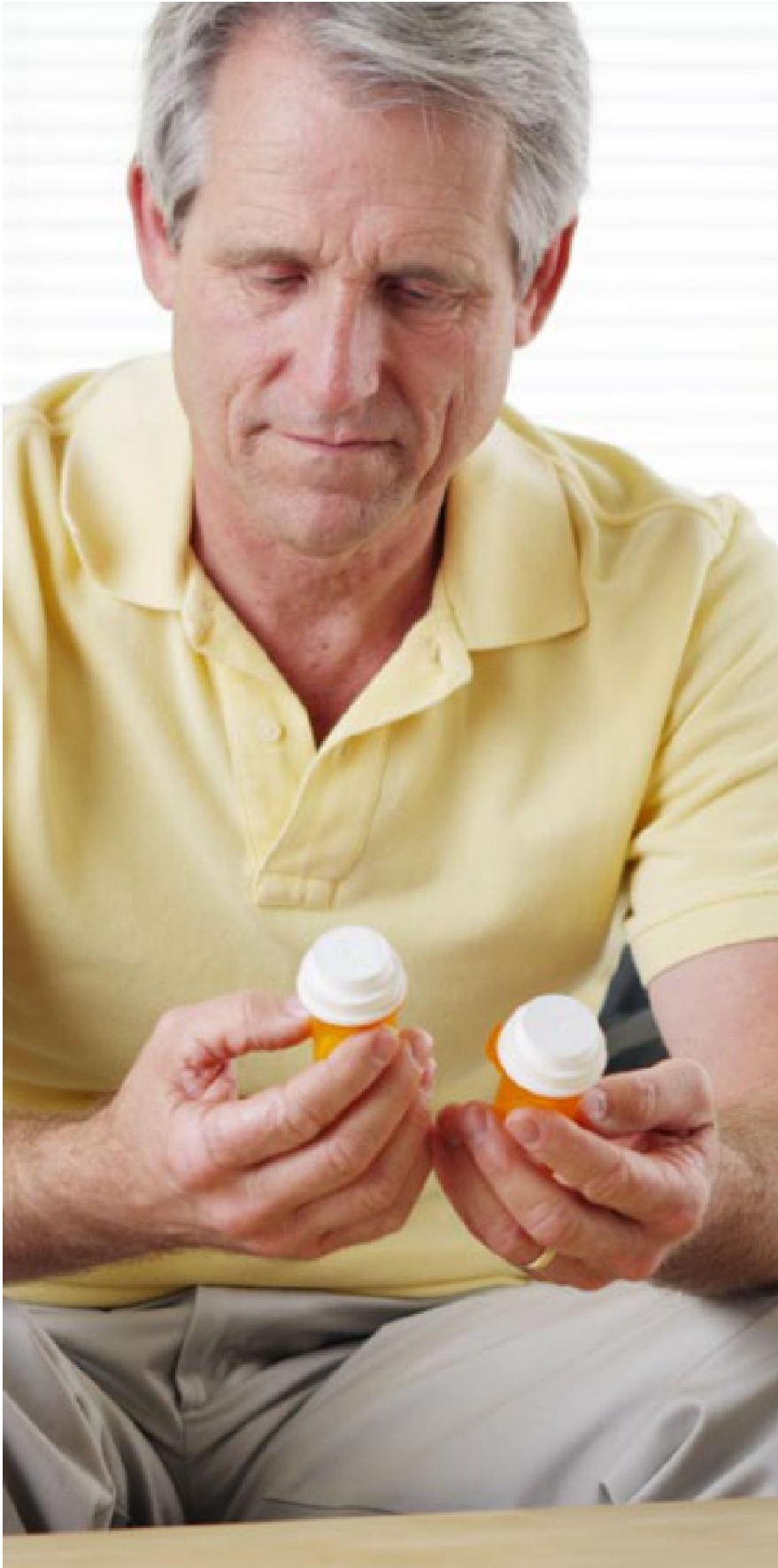




Tapering Opioid Use Safely



Overview

When it's time for you to stop taking your opioid medication, you need to do it safely. If you've only been using your medication for a brief time, your doctor may say it's OK to stop suddenly. But if you've used it for longer, your doctor may say you need to stop gradually to let your body adjust. We call this "tapering."

Withdrawal plan

If you've been told to do this, ask your doctor for a withdrawal plan. It's also known as a "taper." It shows you how to take smaller amounts over the next weeks or months. The length of your taper is based on your needs.

Avoid withdrawal symptoms

Follow your withdrawal plan carefully. It will help you avoid withdrawal symptoms. These are things like restlessness, anxiety, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. You can have confusion, a rapid heart rate, blood pressure changes or other symptoms. These are unpleasant. They can make it hard for you to stop taking your medication. So you definitely want to avoid them.

Support

If you're finding it hard to stop taking your opioid, talk to your doctor about getting help. You may benefit from counseling or from a support group. You may need to continue this support even after you've stopped taking your medication. Your doctor will create a care plan that's right for you.