

## Australians urged to see their GP for help stopping antidepressants after new guidelines endorsed - Royal Australian College of GPs

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The Royal Australian College of GPs (RACGP) says people who want to stop taking antidepressants should see their GP for support after endorsing the Maudsley Deprescribing Guidelines for use in Australia.

RACGP President Dr Nicole Higgins said: “GPs are at the front line of Australia’s mental health crisis, and we know how hard it can be for people who want to stop using antidepressants to do so.

“More than 22 million Australians visit a GP every year. And GPs are increasingly reporting mental health in their most common reasons for a patient visit – from 61% in 2022 to 72% in 2023, according to our [Health of the Nation report](#).

“Antidepressants generally are a helpful and effective treatment option for many people, but they are not generally advised for use longer than 6 to 12 months.

“But while some people can come off these drugs relatively easily, others have side effects severe enough they keep taking a medication they want to stop. And people have no way of knowing what their experience will be like until they stop.

“I urge anyone who wants to stop using antidepressants to see their GP for evidence-based support.

“The RACGP has now endorsed new guidelines from the UK’s Maudsley Hospital for use in Australia. These are helpful guidelines for GPs to use to support patients to come off antidepressants and other drugs of dependence, which is known as deprescribing.

“It’s important to remember that every patient is unique. While antidepressants work for some, others may be able to come off them.

“The government also needs to ensure all Australians can access affordable general practice care, and help coming off antidepressants if they need it. And

we're continuing to call for higher Medicare rebates for patients who need longer consultations, which are essential for mental health care.”

~ENDS

About us:

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) is the peak representative organisation for general practice, the backbone of Australia's health system. We set the standards for general practice, facilitate lifelong learning for GPs, connect the general practice community, and advocate for better health and wellbeing for all Australians.

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