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## **CHILDREN WHO ARE SEIZURE-FREE MAY BE ABLE TO STOP TAKING ANTIEPILEPTIC DRUGS**

Children with a history of epilepsy may be able to stop their treatment if they have had no seizures for at least two years, according to *Australian Prescriber*.

In the February issue of *Australian Prescriber*, Dr Robert L Smith, Child Neurologist and Clinical Lecturer in Child Health from John Hunter Hospital, Newcastle, discusses how to stop antiepileptic medicines in children.

Seizures will naturally stop in about 70% of children with epilepsy as they grow older, so withdrawal of antiepileptic medicines is often possible. While children are delighted at the prospect, many parents may be more apprehensive.

'For some parents, stopping their child's antiepileptic medicines may be more stressful than starting them', says Dr Smith.

The type of epilepsy is one of the most important predictors of outcome and the withdrawal must be closely managed by the child's doctor.

Withdrawal of the medication should take place at a mutually convenient time for the child, family, school and the supervising practitioner, Dr Smith says. The withdrawal plan should also include preparing the family, school and other carers.

'Each child must be managed individually while considering numerous factors regarding the epilepsy, the family and the wider community'.

It is important not to stop treatment abruptly. The medicines are usually withdrawn over a minimum of six weeks.

For the complete article visit the *Australian Prescriber* website [www.australianprescriber.com](http://www.australianprescriber.com). *Australian Prescriber* is an independent peer-reviewed journal providing critical commentary on therapeutic topics for health professionals. It is published by National Prescribing Service Limited (NPS), an independent, non-profit organisation funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing.

**For further information or expert commentary about this article please contact Anna Karelis at NPS by telephone on (02) 8217 8700 (bh) or 0419 618 365 (media mobile) or by email at [akarelis@nps.org.au](mailto:akarelis@nps.org.au).**

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