

Educational Links (English):

- ❖ <http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/healthadvice/treatmentswellbeing/benzodiazepines.aspx>
- ❖ <http://patient.info/health/benzodiazepines-and-z-drugs>
- ❖ http://www.medicinenet.com/benzodiazepines_sleep-inducing-oral/article.htm
- ❖ https://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug_chem_info/benzo.pdf
- ❖ <http://www.webmd.com/mental-health/addiction/benzodiazepine-abuse>
- ❖ <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/mental-health-medications/index.shtml>

Emergencies:

A benzodiazepine poisoning or large intake can be fatal and cause death. If you have injected a large amount of this type of medicine or if a family member of yours has done so call 9-1-1 and request an ambulance.



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Lumos Psychiatric Services



Educational Booklet: Benzodiazepines

Benzodiazepines are anxiolytic medicines (for the treatment of anxiety). Anxiety is a natural response to stress, necessary to maintain normal functioning in daily living activities. But when anxiety doesn't let us work or perform our tasks it can require medication. Anxiolytics may be needed to help you feel relaxed and stay calm in the face of adversity. At high doses, they can induce sleep. Occasionally, they may have other uses not described in this brochure.

Before starting benzodiazepine, tell your doctor if:

- ❖ Suffers from drug allergies
- ❖ Are pregnant or nursing
- ❖ Use over-the-counter or natural products
- ❖ Has heart problems
- ❖ Has seizures
- ❖ Suffers from sleep apnea
- ❖ Suffers from gout

REMEMBER TO TAKE YOUR MEDICATIONS AS INDICATED BY YOUR MEDICAL WITHOUT MAKING CHANGES IN FREQUENCY OR PRESCRIPTION DOSAGE.

Name of the most common benzodiazepines:

Alprazolam (<i>Xanax</i>)	Chlordiazepoxide (<i>Librium</i>)
Clonazepam (<i>Klonopin</i>)	Clorazepate (<i>Tranxene</i>)
Diazepam (<i>Valium</i>)	Estazolam (<i>Prosom</i>)
Flurazepam (<i>Dalmane</i>)	Lorazepam (<i>Ativan</i>)
Temazepam (<i>Restoril</i>)	Triazolam (<i>Halcion</i>)
Oxazepam (<i>Serax</i>)	Midazolam (<i>Versed</i>)

When you start taking benzodiazepines, the therapeutic effect (decreased symptoms) is usually immediate, feeling calm or sedation within the next hour after taking the medicine.

Indications for the use of benzodiazepine:

- ❖ Anxiety, Mild or Moderate
- ❖ Agitation
- ❖ Generalized Anxiety Disorder
- ❖ Alcohol Withdrawal Syndrome, Acute or Chronic
- ❖ Panic Disorder, with/without Agoraphobia (Alprazolam, Clorazepate)
- ❖ Insomnia
- ❖ Dystonia and muscle spasms
- ❖ Restless legs syndrome
- ❖ Seizures
- ❖ Tetanus (Diazepam)

Most common benzodiazepine side effects:

- ❖ Sedation
- ❖ Fatigue
- ❖ Dizziness
- ❖ Confusion
- ❖ Memory problems
- ❖ Decreased blood pressure
- ❖ Problems coordinating movements or concentration
- ❖ Nausea the stomach acidity
- ❖ Blurred vision
- ❖ Dry mouth
- ❖ Sexual dysfunction
- ❖ Increased salivation (Clonazepam)
- ❖ Headache
- ❖ Muscle weakness
- ❖ Paradoxical effect – Agitation, hallucinations, nightmares, euphoria, courage, violent behavior, irritability, impulsivity
- ❖ Excessive dose - respiratory depression

Contraindications for using benzodiazepines:

- ❖ If you have had a drug allergy
- ❖ If you have glaucoma (closed angle)
- ❖ If you have severe liver disease
- ❖ If you have sleep apnea

How long will I have to take benzodiazepine?

Anxiety can go away on its own. Once the cause is treated or eliminated, anxiety symptoms may decrease. It is recommended that anxiolytics be taken for a limited time. Many patients use the drug only when they need it and not daily. The drug may lose effectiveness if taken for more than 4 months.

Does the use of benzodiazepines create dependence or addiction?

Yes. It is recommended that its use be for a short period of time.

What can happen if you abruptly discontinue a benzodiazepine?

Benzodiazepines can cause withdrawal symptoms if you stop taking them suddenly. Some withdrawal symptoms you might feel are: insomnia, anxiety, agitation, irritability, stomach pain, tremors, headache, muscle pain, loss of appetite, and seizures. If you want to stop taking the medicine, you should consult with your doctor to plan a method of gradual decrease.

General recommendations:

- ❖ See a psychiatrist for the treatment of your mental condition.
- ❖ Take benzodiazepines with food, with water, milk or Chinese or apple juice.
- ❖ Avoid grapefruit juice because grapefruit juice changes the effect of the medicine on your body.
- ❖ Avoid driving a car or operating machinery if you feel sedated or slow from thought.
- ❖ Avoid alcohol, as benzodiazepines increase the effect of alcohol and may make you feel more sedated or dizzy.
- ❖ Avoid caffeine (coffee, tea, cola), as it can increase irritability.
- ❖ When taking your medications, be aware of any side effects that may occur.
- ❖ It is important to supplement the use of your medications by attending psychotherapy.
- ❖ Do not discontinue medicines without first discussing it with your doctor.

For questions or concerns, discuss it with your doctor.