

Prescription Benzodiazepines



Includes Valium (diazepam), Xanax (alprazolam), ProSom (estazolam), Ativan (lorazepam). The chemical names of these drugs often end in –“am”



What Are Prescription Benzodiazepines?

-Prescription benzodiazepines are drugs prescribed by medical professionals mostly for insomnia, anxiety, and panic attacks.

-Benzodiazepines are drugs that serve a good use when used in the proper medical setting, but can also be used in unsafe ways.

How do Benzodiazepines Work?

-GABA is a neurotransmitter in your brain that is responsible for decreasing nervous system activity.

-benzodiazepines help GABA to bind to certain receptors more effectively, and this causes your brain’s activity to become more suppressed.

Effects:

-Short Term: drowsiness, impaired ability to concentrate, lower anxiety, lower blood pressure, lower heart rate

-Long Term: Long-term use of benzodiazepines can cause dependence, addiction, and withdrawal. For this reasons, doctors rarely prescribe benzodiazepines for very extended periods of time.

Abuse

-Nonmedical use: recreational users may use benzodiazepines in pill form, or may crush it and then either snort or inject the drug. Crushing a pill and injecting it leads to tissue damage at the site of injection, because irritating chemicals are present in the pill.

-Use with Other Drugs: Benzodiazepines are abused by combining them with either other depressants (alcohol, painkillers, sedatives) or stimulants (methamphetamine, cocaine, ecstasy). Combining drugs typically poses more risks than using them alone.

-Overdose: Users can overdose as a result of taking too high of a dose of benzodiazepines. The risk increases with the simultaneous use of other depressants (alcohol, sedatives, barbiturates, opiates like heroin).

-Withdrawal: A long-term user who is addicted and experiencing withdrawal symptoms should seek medical help to deal with the symptoms of withdrawal. They can include insomnia, anxiety, drug craving, headache, difficulty concentrating, and in some cases seizures.

For More Information:

Visit:

<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/mhdao/Factsheets/Pages/benzodiazepines.aspx>
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