

# Benzodiazepines



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# What are Benzodiazepines?

Benzodiazepines are a type of medication classified as tranquilizers and are one of the most commonly prescribed drugs by physicians and psychiatrists. Benzodiazepines are used to treat some common disorders:

- Insomnia
- Anxiety
- Panic disorder
- Obsessive-compulsive disorder
- Seizures

They can also be used as a general anesthetic and can induce amnesia to forget discomfort during surgical procedures.

- Ambien
- Ativan
- Klonopin
- Valium
- Xanax

## Why?

For young adults one of the biggest reasons for benzodiazepine misuse seems to be stress coupled with poor understanding of the drug's full effects. They are one of the most misused drugs among teens because they are so commonly prescribed to this age group.

Misuse of prescribed benzodiazepines falls under 3 categories:

- Patients who are prescribed benzodiazepines for short-term treatment continue usage long-term
- Patients increase dosage without consultation and find ways to facilitate dosage increase
- Patients attempt to acquire/use benzodiazepines without prescription

## What are the effects?

If you have had frequent experiences with:

- Depression
- Desensitization to physical stimuli
- Insomnia
- Muscle spasms
- Seizures
- Suicidal tendencies
- Sweating

...then you may be suffering from benzodiazepine addiction

You may be diagnosed with benzodiazepine dependence if you...

- Have unsuccessfully tried to stop or reduce dosage
- Experience discomfort when not using benzodiazepines
- Have been using benzodiazepines over a long period of time with increased frequency or dose
- Do not experience lowered anxiety upon taking benzodiazepines

## Treatment

Gradual decreases in dosage amounts should be implemented and be under the control of the patient. Antidepressants may be used to counteract depressive symptoms, which are common after withdrawal.

It is also recommended to seek psychological support. Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) provides treatment for any panic anxiety disorder through the use of talk therapy which allows the patient to understand why they are reliant on benzodiazepines.