

## What are the risks?

Taking benzodiazepines have a number of risks

### Psychological:

- Increased anxiety
- Aggressive behaviour
- Agitation / irritability
- Delusions/hallucinations
- Depersonalisations  
(feeling detached from your surroundings)
- Depression
- De-realisation  
(feelings that surroundings aren't real)
- Suicidal thoughts/behaviour
- Reduced inhibitions
- Nightmares
- Personality changes
- Psychosis
- Restlessness

### Physical:

- Physiological dependence (even in low-doses)
- High potential for addiction
- Increased risk of developing dementia in long-term addiction
- Can cause unpleasant withdrawal effects such as tremors, nausea, vomiting, headaches, anxiety, panic attacks, fits etc.
- Death
- Slow reaction time
- Reduce coordination
- Overdose

The risk of overdose increases when mixing benzo's with alcohol and/or opioids which is particularly dangerous.

## Benzodiazepines and the law

Tranquillisers are prescription-only medicines. They're controlled under class C of the Misuse of Drugs Act.

It's illegal to possess benzodiazepines without a prescription. Unauthorised possession could result in a prison sentence of up to 2 years and/or an unlimited fine.

Supplying could result in up to 14 years in prison and/or an unlimited fine.

A conviction for a drug-related offence could have a pretty serious impact. It can stop you visiting certain countries – for example the United States – and limit the types of jobs you can apply for.

### Find out more

If you would like more information or support on benzodiazepines or you are affected by someone else's use please contact us at Inclusion Recovery Hampshire.

Information is also available at:

NHS Website: [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

Talk to Frank Website: [www.talktofrank.com](http://www.talktofrank.com)

Adfam website: [www.adfam.org.uk](http://www.adfam.org.uk)

### HOW TO CONTACT US

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Or visit: [www.staffstars.org](http://www.staffstars.org)

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Find out more at [www.inclusion.org](http://www.inclusion.org)

## Benzodiazepines (Benzo's) What you need to know!



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## What are benzodiazepines?

A type of tranquilliser that can induce periods of calmness, relaxation and sleep if taken for a short period of time.

- They are used to treat anxiety and insomnia, namely under the brand names Xanax, Ativan and Valium.
- They are addictive and liable to misuse.
- They are also known as: Mogadon, Diazepam, Nitrazepam, Jellies, Temazepam, Tranx, Vallies, Benzos, Roofies, Vallium, Rohypnol, Librium, Blues.

## The myths

- They are great for late-night insomnia, in fact they are not
- They aren't addictive if you only take low doses

They are not helpful for late night insomnia when taken regularly, they can impact negatively on sleeping routines and natural sleep patterns.

In addition to this some people can start having symptoms of between-dose withdrawal (the first sign of addiction) after taking benzodiazepines for only a few weeks. For others, addiction takes place over a period of weeks or months. Sooner or later everyone will become addicted.

## How are benzodiazepines taken?

There are a few ways of taking benzodiazepines.

They come as tablets, capsules, injections or suppositories (these are tablets inserted up the bum).

## What does it look like?

They come in tablet form and there are lots of different colours, shapes, sizes and strengths that benzodiazepines are produced in.



## Did you know?

Sleeping pills and minor tranquillisers slow your thinking and your reactions, so you should be cautious about driving or operating machinery after taking them as it could be dangerous—even the next day!

## What are the effects?

Benzodiazepines work on the central nervous system, reducing the activity of nerve cells (neurons) within the brain. Its effects can turn out to be pleasant or unpleasant and last between 6 and 24 hours:

- Make you feel chilled out, happy and relaxed
- Benzodiazepines possess sedative, hypnotic, anti-anxiety, anti-convulsant, and muscle relaxant properties affecting emotional reactions, memory, thinking, control of consciousness, muscle tone and coordination
- Drowsiness
- Light-headedness and dizziness
- Confusion
- Unsteadiness (especially in older people, who may have falls and injure themselves as a result)
- Slurred speech
- Muscle weakness
- Memory problems
- Constipation
- Nausea (feeling sick)
- Dry mouth
- Blurred vision
- Some cause short-term memory loss.
- Big doses can make a user forgetful and make them overly sleepy