



## Benzodiazepines

**Street Names:** Xanax, Valium K-Pins, Roofies, Rohypnol, Benzo's, Bennies, Tranx, Zombies  
It's essential to note that street slang can vary by region. Different areas may have their own unique names for benzodiazepines.

Benzos is what doctors sometimes give to people who feel really anxious or have trouble sleeping. These drugs can help calm down your brain and make you feel more relaxed. They do this by making a special chemical in your brain called GABA work even better. GABA helps control all the crazy activity happening in your brain. So when you take benzos, they team up with GABA to slow things down and make you feel less anxious.

Despite their medical benefits, benzos have found their way into the illicit drug market. As prescription rates have increased, so has their availability on the streets. Many individuals misuse benzos for their sedative and euphoric effects, or to enhance the effects of other substances like opioids or alcohol. This misuse can have serious consequences and is a growing concern for public health.

### Signs and Symptoms

Identifying potential benzo use can involve noticing various physical signs, including:- Drowsiness or sedation, slurred speech and impaired coordination, memory problems or confusion, slow reflexes or decreased motor skills.

Sometimes, we can tell if someone is using benzodiazepines by looking at their body. They might seem really tired or sleepy, and their speech might be slurred or hard to understand. They might also have trouble with their memory or feel confused. Their reflexes might be slow, and they might have a hard time doing things that require coordination.

But it's not just physical signs that can show if someone is using benzo. There are also things they might do or feel that can give it away. They might have big mood swings or act really differently from one moment to the next. Or start taking more risks than usual or want to be alone all the time. They might also seem really calm or like they're not really in touch with reality.

If someone has taken a lot of benzos, there may be even more serious symptoms. They might be so tired that they can't stay awake or even pass out. They might have trouble breathing, taking really slow or shallow breaths. They can feel really confused or not know where they are. In the worst cases, they might even lose consciousness or go into a coma.

## **Effects**

When you take benzos, you might feel relaxed, sleepy, less anxious, and your muscles might loosen up. But if you misuse or abuse these drugs, there can be some bad consequences, like:

- Forgetting things or not remembering what happened (blackouts)
- Make bad choices and not thinking clearly
- Being more likely to have accidents or fall down
- Feeling even more anxious or angry than before (paradoxical reactions)
- Needing more and more of the drug to get the same effect (tolerance) and feeling sick when you stop taking it (withdrawal symptoms)
- Having trouble thinking and remembering things (cognitive impairment)
- Being more likely to have mental health problems like depression and anxiety
- Not being able to do well in school or work because of the drug (impaired social and occupational functioning)

Abusing benzodiazepines can hurt both your body and mind. If you use them too much, you might have trouble breathing, problems sleeping, a weaker immune system, and be more likely to get sick. Also, these drugs can make mental health problems worse and make it easier for you to become addicted to other substances.

When you buy benzodiazepines from someone on the street, one of the biggest dangers is not knowing what's really in them. Street drugs can have other things mixed in, so you can't be sure what you're getting. Not knowing this makes it more likely that you'll have unexpected and dangerous effects.

Using benzodiazepines from the street makes it much more likely that you'll overdose. Since the strength of street drugs can be very different, it's hard to know how much you should take. Taking too much can make you stop breathing, pass out, and even die. It's really important to remember that these drugs are strong and should only be used with a doctor.

## **Recognising the Need for Help**

If you or someone you know is having a tough time with benzo addiction, it is vital to understand that you need help. Signs that you might be addicted can be things like needing more and more of the drug to feel the same effects, feeling sick when you try to stop taking it, and still wanting

to use it even if it is causing bad stuff to happen. Admitting that there's a problem is the first step to getting the support you need.