I’m glad it’s over.

Last week, I spent five days taking a drug that the movie *Limitless*is based on; Bradley Cooper plays the lead. In real life, the drug's called "Nuvigil."  Sadly, upon taking it, my cheek bones and abs did not take on the same characteristics as Mr. Cooper’s. But I did learn a hell of a lot about this pill, a so-called “magic drug” that increases dopamine flow within the brain and, by proxy, fights excessive daytime sleepiness.

Air traffic controllers and schizophrenics alike are frequent users of the FDA-approved Nuvigil. After seeing the movie I was curious what the drug actually felt like and, considering I have about 27 years experience ingesting prescription medicine, I thought, *Who better to explore the depths of its effects than me?* Below are several of the highs (and lows) of the week.

Don’t try this at home. Unless your doctor prescribed it; then, by all means.

My first mistake? Googling “Nuvigil effects.” Go ahead, I’ll wait for you to do a quick search.memory pill

Waiting...

Yeah, see what I mean? Vomiting, severe blistering, mouth sores...nothing you want to involve with your summer BBQ. But the potential effect that really shook me was when it said “may cause suicidal thoughts.” Crap. Almost immediately, I reached out to my psychiatrist friend (who asked to be referred to simply as Dr. F) in Connecticut to assuage my jangled nerves. His main advice: “Immediately discontinue use of this if you have suicidal thoughts.”

When I couldn’t help but ask why certain medicine has this effect, Dr. F explained further: “Basically when you have severe depression, there is very little capacity in your brain to try anything and you’re limited in your thoughts and actions,” he said. “You’re too depressed to go out for a walk and too depressed to attempt suicide. Antidepressants can, in few cases, cause the brain to go from a state of helpless depression to a state where you’re cognitive enough to be made fully aware of your own unhappiness and -- in rare cases -- have suicidal thoughts.”

“IMMEDIATELY DISCONTINUE USE OF THIS IF YOU HAVE SUICIDAL THOUGHTS.”

Nuvigil’s half-life is short (12-15 hours), meaning the effects can be felt almost immediately. While it’s probably not necessary for me to spend five days on it, I decided to for consistency’s sake. Summed up simply: the drug’s supposed to make you feel happier.

Beginning with one 150 mg pill in the morning, happiness and alertness waves washed over me. Quickly. But I wasn’t as jittery as I expected. Prozac is a familiar reference to Nuvigil, and I have plenty of experience with the former, but it was nothing like I had ever experienced before. My brain waves -- usually jumbled, misfiring, and inconsistent -- felt untangled and clean, like a futuristic room full of glowing servers from Dubai, if you will.

But there were a lot of conflicting results.

NOTHING IS BAD BUT NOTHING IS GOOD, ALL AT ONCE. CALL IT A MUTED EUPHORIA.

I know you’re wondering -- did I experience any of these “suicidal thoughts”? No, I didn’t. Not once. I’m very thankful for that, but this is just one man’s journey; what happened to me may not be the case for you. I hate to think that drugs meant to elevate your mood can bring you to such a dark place. You’d think that’d be like, the first thing they try to keep your brain from doing.