Benzodiazepine: What it is and How it Works

July 11 is World Benzodiazepine Awareness Day, a day dedicated to developing a better understanding of the drug, raise awareness, and educate the public about the potential dangers of long-term use of the drug. We want you to be as educated about your mental health as possible, which is why we are using this World Benzodiazepine Awareness Day to educate you about what the drug is and how it works.

# **What is Benzodiazepine?**

Benzodiazepine is a class of medication used for slowing down the activity within a person's brain and nervous system. Because of this, Benzodiazepine can be a useful drug for treating a wide variety of symptoms and ailments. Most often, these medications are used to treat health struggles like anxiety and seizures.

Benzodiazepine is considered a controlled substance in the United States, meaning it is strictly regulated and only legally attainable with a prescription. Possessing Benzodiazepines without a prescription is considered illegal without a doctor's prescription.

Why are they considered a controlled substance? Because they can be considered highly addictive and dangerous when used incorrectly. If a person uses the incorrect dosage of the drugs, their nervous system's activity levels are at risk of dropping too low, which can be deadly or have serious health consequences.

# **What is Anxiety?**

The mental health condition Benzodiazepines are most often used to treat is anxiety. While experiencing anxiety from time to time is a normal part of life, an anxiety disorder is a mental health condition that causes a person to experience excessive and intense feelings of worry, fear, or anxiety. Some symptoms of an anxiety disorder include:

* Excessive feelings of nervousness and restlessness
* Constant feelings of impending doom or danger
* Struggles to concentrate on anything other than your worries
* Struggling to control your worries and fears
* Avoiding things that may trigger feelings of anxiety
* Increased heart rate
* Hyperventilation
* Fatigue and weakness
* Sweating
* Trembling and shaking
* Changes in sleep and eating patterns
* Stomach issues

# **How Benzodiazepine Works to Help Someone Coping with Anxiety**

Some examples of Benzodiazepines include Xanax and Valium. They work by strengthening the [neurotransmitter GABA](https://adaa.org/learn-from-us/from-the-experts/blog-posts/consumer/ssris-and-benzodiazepines-general-anxiety), which works as a relaxing factor in the brain by signaling certain areas of it to "turn off." Because of this, Benzodiazepine works to reduce the symptoms most often associated with anxiety disorder, like worry, panic attacks, restlessness, insomnia, and muscle tension.

Benzodiazepine is a fast-acting, short-term medication for anxiety symptoms. This means that a person using the medication to treat their anxiety will likely experience quick relief that only lasts a few hours. While they have few negative short-term side effects, Benzodiazepines are not considered safe for long-term use. Because of this, they are only a temporary solution for anxiety disorders.

# **We Are Here for You**

If you have been struggling with anxiety, seeking therapy can prove crucial to improving your quality of life. Our therapists are here for you. [Contact](http://michiganpsychologicalcare.com/contact.php) us today, and we will work with you to feel happier, healthier, and more stress-free.

**References**

[https://adaa.org/learn-from-us/from-the-experts/blog-posts/consumer/ssris-and-benzodiazepines-general-anxiety](https://adaa.org/learn-from-us/from-the-experts/blog-posts/consumer/ssris-and-benzodiazepines-general-anxiety" \t "_blank)

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