

BENZODIAZEPINES

Street Names

Benzos, temazies, jellies, eggs, moggies, vallies

Description

Benzodiazepines are doctor-prescribed drugs for reducing stress and anxiety, promoting calmness, relaxation and sleep and as anti-depressants (Examples include: estazolam (ProSom), flurazepam (Dalmane), quazepam (Doral), temazepam (Restoril) and triazolam (Halcion), alprazolam (Xanax), chlordiazepoxide (Librium), clorazepate (Tranxene), diazepam (Valium), halazepam (Paxipam), lorazepam (Ativan), oxazepam (Serax) and prazepam (Centrax)

Routes of Use

The drug comes in tablet form, although it can be injected.

History

Benzodiazepines were introduced and have largely supplanted the Barbiturate group of drugs, which were widely prescribed and widely misused in the seventies. They were seen as preferential to barbiturates as the risks of overdose, dependence and side-effects were thought to be less. They are very widely prescribed; some critics argue that they are over-prescribed, and do not tackle the causes, merely masking symptoms temporarily.

Effects People Seek

They are used recreationally in a number of settings. Used as a 'chill out' drug on the club scene or as a downer. Some people combine benzodiazepines with alcohol to enhance and increase intoxication. Some stimulant users take benzodiazepines to alleviate the "come-down" from speed, Ecstasy or cocaine, and to promote sleep. It is not uncommon for dependent heroin users to use benzodiazepines when heroin is unavailable, or to use them to help offset some of the symptoms of withdrawal. Some people self-medicate with benzodiazepines to alleviate mental discomfort caused by their mental health problems, painful memories, or to escape unpleasant circumstances.

Other Effects

Users can experience forgetfulness, confusion and drowsiness - so don't use and drive, or work machinery.

Dependence & Tolerance

Physical and psychological dependence can be a real risk with these drugs. Psychological (mental) problems are most common. In these cases the user will quickly begin to rely on the pills to cope with life pressures and problems and become very panicky if no pills are available. Because Benzos have a similar action and effect as Alcohol, some people who are dependent on Alcohol can become dependent on Benzos much quicker. Withdrawal symptoms include mood swings anxiety, nausea, irritability, stomach cramps, insomnia, mood swings. If physically dependent, DON'T STOP SUDDENLY. It is best to come off gradually. Withdrawal should be managed, so ask your doctor or drug service for help.

The Law

Benzos are class C drugs, only available on prescription. It's illegal to possess benzos, including Temazepam, without a prescription. Possession, 2 years and an unlimited fine; supply, 14 yrs in prison, and an unlimited fine.