

Benzodiazepines (Sedatives)

Common Use: Relief of anxiety, insomnia, muscle spasms, and agitation. Some benzodiazepines are also used for treatment of epilepsy and seizure states.

Key Tips:

- Do not operate heavy machinery, drive, or do other dangerous activities when taking benzodiazepines, especially when you first start taking these medications or if your dose has been increased. These medications may make you sleepy, lightheaded, or may prevent you from reacting quickly while doing these things.
- Benzodiazepines can be habit-forming. Do not take larger doses, take more often, or for longer periods of time than your physician has ordered.
- Stopping a benzodiazepine suddenly can worsen your condition or cause withdrawal symptoms. Do not stop this medication without talking with your physician.
- Caution is advised when taking benzodiazepines with other medications that may cause drowsiness, such as muscle relaxants, sleeping pills, antihistamines, and pain medications. These medications may increase the effectiveness of the benzodiazepines, causing more drowsiness or a decreased level of consciousness. It is important to let your physician know what medications you are already taking before starting a sedative.
- For women of child bearing years, tell your physician if you are pregnant, plan on becoming pregnant, or are breast-feeding while taking benzodiazepines.

Common Side Effects with Sedatives:

- Constipation
- Nausea
- Sleepiness
- Lightheadedness
- Dizziness
- Drowsiness
- Sweating
- Low blood pressure

Warning Signs

Call your doctor if you have any of these signs:

- Your breathing slows down, becomes shallow, or you have difficulty breathing
- Worsening feelings of dizziness or lightheadedness
- Confusion or unusual changes in behavior
- Decreased level of consciousness
- Difficulty urinating

If you notice other side effects that you think are caused by this medicine, tell your doctor. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects.

References:

U.S. Food and Drug Administration at <http://www.fda.gov>

