

BENZODIAZEPINES

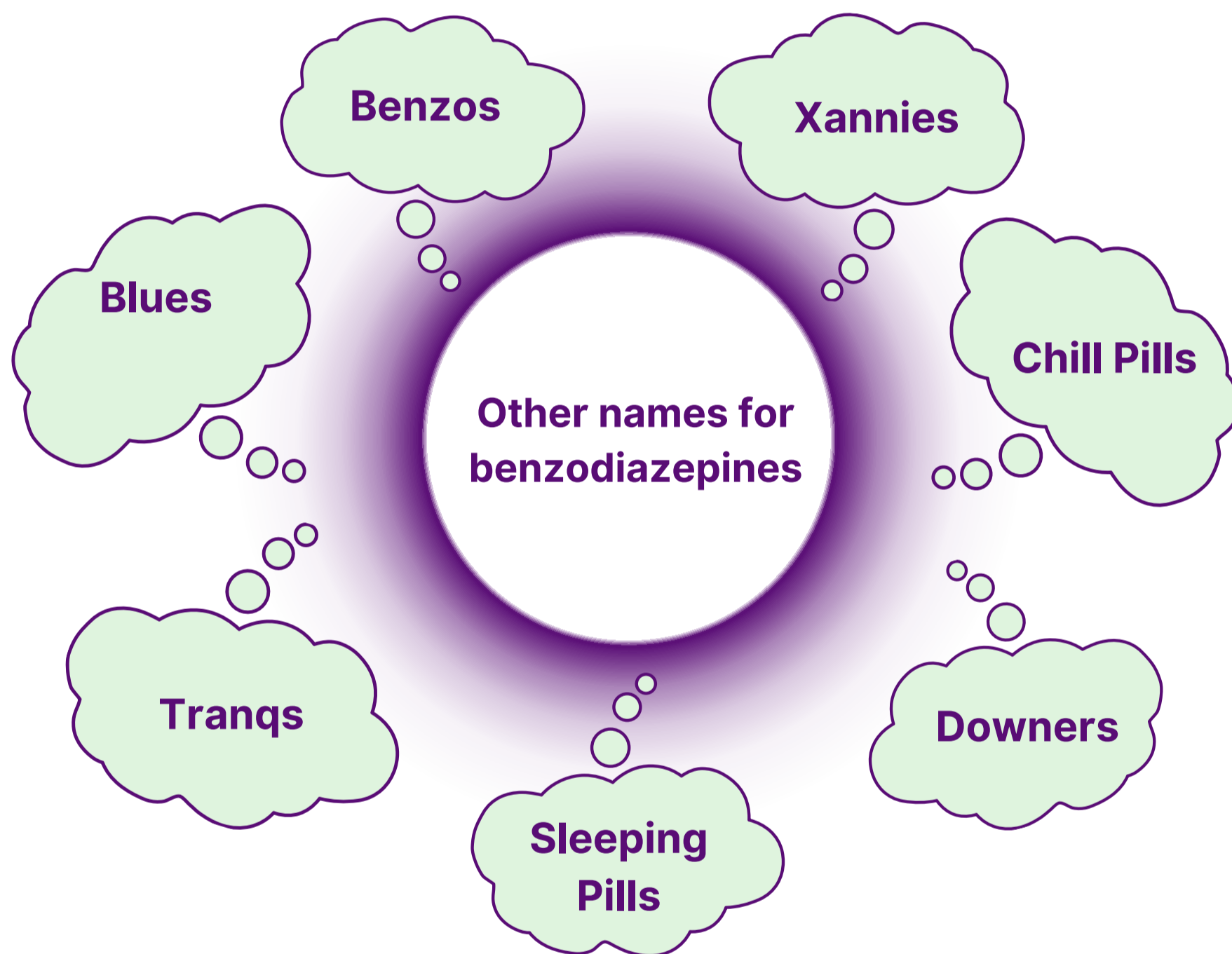
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

What are they?

Benzodiazepines are depressants

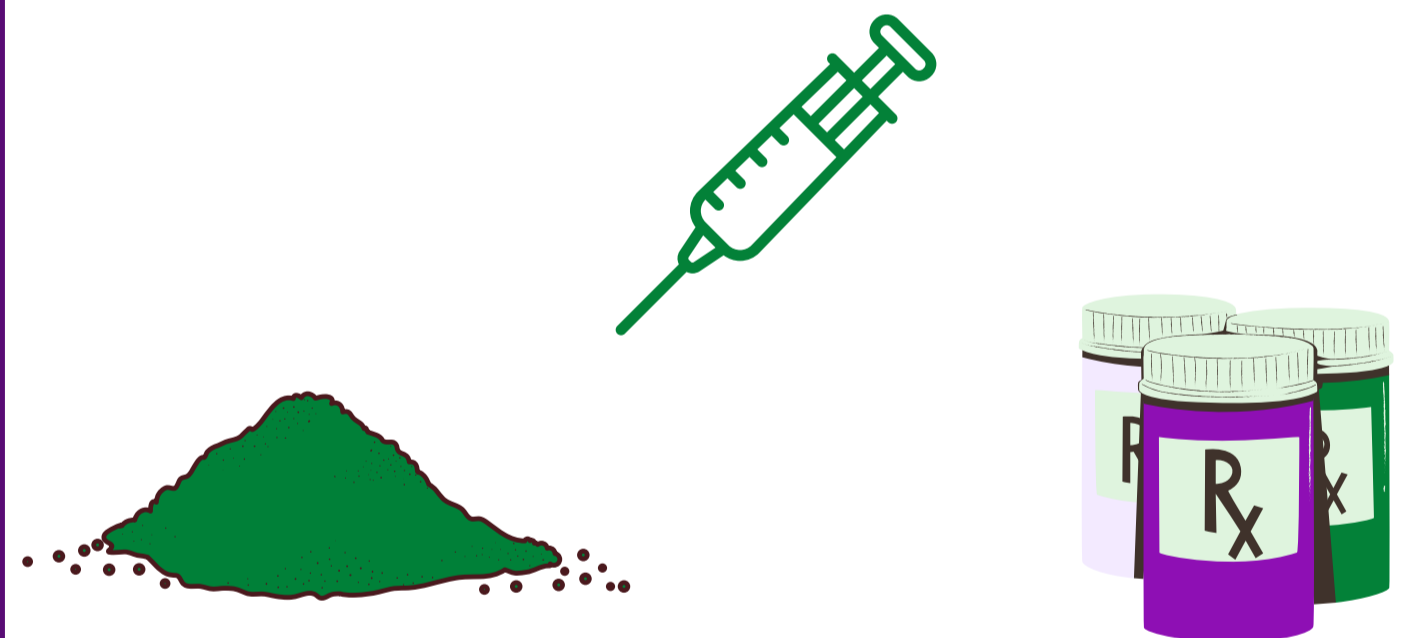


Benzodiazepines are used medically for sleep, anxiety disorders, panic disorders, and alcohol use disorder. However, their anti-anxiety effect is often overused in non-medical ways. Common brand names of benzodiazepines include Ativan, Valium, and Xanax. They can come as tablets or capsules.



How are they used?

Benzodiazepines can be taken orally, dissolved under the tongue, snorted through the nose, or injected.



What are the effects?



Benzodiazepines have a fast onset of effect, but it may vary depending on the drug.



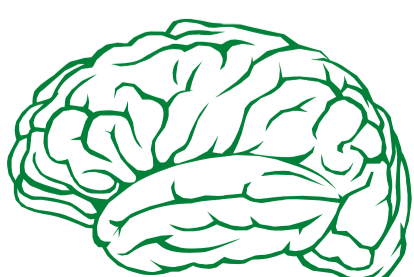
Benzodiazepines can make you really sleepy. This sleepiness can last into the next day. Some people have strange or disturbing dreams.



Benzodiazepines may make you feel less worried about things on your mind.



Your muscles may feel very weak. You may become very uncoordinated.



You may lose your short-term memory and have a slower reaction time.



With long-term use, it may be hard to go about your day without taking a benzodiazepine. Going without one may make you feel anxious and shaky.

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When do you seek emergency help?



Benzodiazepine poisoning or overdose: The result of taking too much or combining it with other sedating substances like alcohol.

Signs: Becoming very sleepy (or even losing consciousness). Irregular or slowed breathing. Feeling very disoriented and confused.

Get help right away! This is a medical emergency.

Did you know?

Benzodiazepines are one of the drugs used for sexual assault and are commonly called "date rape drugs." They can cause memory loss and confusion for the victim.



Don't Go Cold Turkey!

Benzodiazepines can cause withdrawal symptoms, including seizures, if they're stopped abruptly!

If you want to reduce your use, reach out for help.



Call 811 for guidance on reducing benzodiazepine use



For more information visit us at:

www.DECYDE.ca

How to stay safer?



Not using benzodiazepines is the best way to stay safer and avoid harms.

If you still decide to use benzodiazepines, consider these harm reduction strategies:

- 1 **Timing matters:** Avoid using benzodiazepines before **school, work, or driving.** It affects concentration and reaction time.
- 2 **Plan for safety.** Have a ride planned for after you take a benzodiazepine. Bring condoms if sex is a possibility.
- 3 **Start small.** Try a small dose at first to see how the benzodiazepine affects you.
- 4 **Don't use alone.** Always have a buddy with you, and check in with friends to make sure they get home safely. Share your location with someone you trust.
- 5 **Moderate use:** Regular use affects your health and relationships. You can develop a dependence.
- 6 **Don't mix!** Combining substances can make it hard to keep track of how much you've taken. You may take too much without realizing it, or get harmful side effects.
- 7 **Choose oral.** Injecting benzodiazepines increases your risk of getting serious infections in your heart and skin. Snorting can increase how quickly you experience side effects, increasing your risk of an overdose.

These documents are intended to support educators in their delivery of drug education. They are not for direct student use unless deemed developmentally appropriate.

References:

1. Greller, H., Gupta, A. (2022). Benzodiazepine poisoning and withdrawal. *UptoDate*. Retrieved on 25 July 2023 from https://www.uptodate.com/contents/benzodiazepine-poisoning-and-withdrawal?search=benzodiazepines&topicRef=88407&source=see_link#H660744300.
2. Mihic S, Mayfield J, Harris R. Hypnotics and Sedatives. In: Brunton LL, Hilal-Dandan R, Knollmann BC, eds. Goodman & Gilman's: The Pharmacological Basis of Therapeutics, 13e. McGraw Hill; 2017. Accessed July 25, 2023. <https://accesspharmacy-mhmedical-com.qe2a-proxy.mun.ca/content.aspx?bookid=2189§ionid=169518968>