



Victory Physicians Family Medicine

Benzodiazepine Information Sheet (Xanax, Ativan, Valium, Klonopin, Restoril, Halcion)

This sheet is intended to provide a brief summary of some of the important properties of benzodiazepines and some of the major risks and side effects of benzodiazepine therapy.

- _____ Initial
- 1) It must be understood that treating anxiety with benzodiazepines comes with the risk of addiction.
- _____ Initial
- 2) All benzodiazepine medications are addictive. In general, the larger the dose, shorter the half life, and the longer duration the dose is taken, the greater the potential for addiction.
- _____ Initial
- 3) Many patients who choose to stop treating their anxiety with benzodiazepines or who have their disease medically or spontaneously cured, require detoxification and rehabilitation to cure their benzodiazepine addiction.
- _____ Initial
- 4) Benzodiazepines cause both physiologic and psychologic dependence. The body and mind come to depend on the presence of the benzodiazepines and can precipitate withdrawal symptoms in their absence.
- _____ Initial
- 5) Benzodiazepines cause tolerance. The higher the dose and the longer the duration of treatment the greater the tolerance. This means it requires a greater and greater dose to achieve the same effect. Since both the mind and body seek the same effect, what results is inadvertent escalation of the dose. This is exactly why only the doctor is permitted to adjust the dose and the dosing regimen.
- _____ Initial
- 6) Benzodiazepines have many side effects some of which can be life threatening. There are too many to list in their entirety here. All patients must read the medication inserts, ask their pharmacist or otherwise research the side effects of benzodiazepines prior to taking these medications. Failure to do so might result in the patient not recognizing an ill effect which can be life threatening. Some of the many side effects include:
- a) Addiction
 - b) Dependence
 - c) Tolerance
 - d) Euphoria
 - e) Sedation
 - f) Respiratory depression
 - g) Faintness or fainting
 - h) Ataxia
 - i) Impaired ability to concentrate and/or operate machinery and/or perform

coordinated tasks

- j) Excess sleep
- k) Slurring of words
- l) Nausea/vomiting
- m) Low blood pressure
- n) Potentiation by other substances like alcohol
- o) Seizure
- p) Amnesia

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Initial
- 7) There are always other alternatives to treating anxiety with benzodiazepines. Depending on the diagnosis, alternatives might include exercise, individual psychotherapy, massage, jacuzzi, breathing techniques, job retraining, group psychotherapy, family psychotherapy, biofeedback, acupuncture, medical marijuana, herbal therapies among others.
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Initial
- 8) It is essential that the patient follow the doctors dosing and dosage regimen and report any adverse reactions or side effects immediately to the doctor. Medication should be stopped until cleared to restart by the physician.
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Initial
- 9) Benzodiazepine medications can cover up, obscure or hide other serious medical problems. If a patient suspects there might be another problem going on, they must seek help immediately. This is why patients can never take anxiety medicines for any problem other than the one they have been prescribed for. Patients must maintain constant vigilance for any other problems that may be materializing.
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Initial
- 10) Any condition that interferes with the patient's ability to follow a doctor's instructions or increases the risk of addiction, might be a contraindication to benzodiazepine therapy and must be disclosed to the physician prior to beginning therapy.
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Initial
- 11) Alcohol, narcotics like Vicodin, muscle relaxants like Soma, sedative hypnotics like Ambien, and recreational drugs can have dangerous additive effects when taken with benzodiazepines. Never drink alcohol or take illicit drugs with benzodiazepines and stagger doses of other prescription medications like narcotics, muscle relaxants and sedative hypnotics by 2 hours to decrease the dangerous additive effects especially on respiratory depression.

My signature below indicates I have read, understand, agree with, and agree to comply with Frank Arian, M.D. A California Professional Corporation dba Victory Physicians' Benzodiazepine Information Sheet and have received a copy for my future reference. I asked all questions I have and all of my questions were answered to my satisfaction and I wish to proceed with benzodiazepine therapy.

Patient's Name

Signature

Date