

Benzodiazepines (Ben-zo-dye-az-eh-pins)

You should read this leaflet with your carer/caregiver

Benzodiazepines:

- Diazepam, alprazolam, bromazepam, chlordiazepoxide, lorazepam and oxazepam are all benzodiazepines.
- Come as tablets, capsules or liquid.

- Benzodiazepines are used for anxiety disorders, sleep problems, and sometimes for muscle spasm and epilepsy.
- Benzodiazepines are sometimes used for people who are distressed. There is no clear evidence that it improves someone's behaviour.

The label on your benzodiazepine's packet should tell you when and how much medicine to take.

Swallow your tablet or capsule with water,

Or,

Measure and swallow the liquid.

If you forget to take your medicine, tell someone straight away.

You should carry on taking your medicine even if you feel better unless your doctor asks you to stop.

Drinking alcohol when taking benzodiazepines could make you feel sleepy.

Some medicines do not work well together.

You should tell your doctor about any other medicines you are taking.

Side effects:

- Medicine can have some effects on your body that are not wanted.
- Not everyone taking a medicine will get them.
- Many will go away with time.
- Many are rare.

You might want to talk to your doctor or the pharmacist or your key worker if you have any side effect.

These are some (but NOT all) side effects of benzodiazepines...

- Feeling unsteady on your feet
- Feeling light headed and faint
- Feeling sleepy and sluggish
- Feeling more aggressive
- Feeling confused
- Problem peeing, may wet yourself
- Problems remembering things



These medicines should not be used if you have a lung disease, muscle weakness, liver disease, sleep disorder called sleep apnoea, drink alcohol excessively or have kidney problem.

Some side effects are more serious.

You should tell someone straight away if you have...

- Problem with breathing
- Muscle weakness
- Rash or blotches on your skin



You should talk to your doctor before you stop taking your medicine.

Sometimes, if you stop taking your medicine, you may have:

- Shaking and sweating
- Anxiety or feel on edge
- Problem sleeping
- Shaky hands
- Confusion or problems remembering
- Weight loss
- Stiffness and pain in muscles



Benzodiazepines may cause addiction. So, difficult to stop if used for long.

You may find the same dose of medicine is not working for you. **You should tell someone straight away if this happens to you.**



This leaflet does not tell you everything about benzodiazepines.

You can get more information from:

- your pharmacist, doctor, nurse or carer/care giver
- check <http://www.choiceandmedication.org/cnwl/>
- NHS on 111
- medicine information helpline on 020 3317 5090.

This leaflet can be downloaded free of charge from:

<https://spectrom.wixsite.com/project>

While preparing this leaflet we checked information in...

- The British National Formulary (www.bnf.org)
- Dulcan, M. K., & Ballard, R. (2015). *Helping parents and teachers understand medications for behavioural and emotional problems: A resource book of medication information handouts*. American Psychiatric Publishing, Washington DC, USA.

This leaflet is not designed for people with intellectual/learning disabilities to read on their own. Support (care) staff or care givers should go through the leaflet with the person who has intellectual disabilities.

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