



Benzodiazepines (Valium)

DESCRIPTION	Benzodiazepines are a group of drugs called minor tranquilisers, often known as 'benzos' or 'tranks'. Valium is available mostly in tablet form. It is used medically to reduce anxiety, to help people sleep and to relax the body.
MODE OF ADMINISTRATION	Valium is generally ingested orally by swallowing it. It is less frequently injected.
PRIMARY EFFECT	Central nervous system depressant.
SHORT-TERM EFFECTS	The effects may last from a few hours to a few days, depending on the dose. The following effects are usually present: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feeling relaxed;• Feeling drowsy, sleepy or tired;• Very little energy;• Some confusion and dizziness;• Increase in feeling good;• Some mood disturbance;• Slurred speech or stuttering;• Loss of co-ordination;• Distorted perceptual and sensory processes;• Loss of short-term memory;• In large doses, coma or death;• Can be lethal when combined with other central nervous system depressants (e.g., alcohol, PCP and Heroin);• Risk of injury.
LONG-TERM EFFECTS	Heavy and continued use can lead to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Loss of energy and interest;• Nausea;• Persistent headaches;• Loss of sex drive;• Skin rashes;• Increase in appetite;• Weight gain;• Psychiatric complications (including depression, severe mood disturbances);• Increase in tolerance, therefore increased need for larger doses to achieve same results (risk of overdose);• Can be lethal when combined with other central nervous system depressants (e.g., alcohol, PCP and Heroin);• Risk of injury.
ADDICTION POTENTIAL	High psychological and physical addiction potential.
TREATMENT OPTIONS	In cases of heavy and prolonged use, inpatient and/or outpatient treatment with the use of multiple therapeutic methods (individual, family and group psychotherapy) is usually necessary to achieve lasting abstinence. Co-morbid conditions are treated if required.