

## Understanding

# Benzodiazepines

## COMMON BRAND NAMES

temazepam (Temaze, Temtabs, Normison)  
Diazepam (Valium, Valpam, Antenex), alprazolam (Kalma), oxazepam (Alepam, Serepax, Murelax), midazolam (Hypnovel), bromazepam (Lexotan), clobazam (Frisium), clonazepam (Paxam, Rivotril), flunitrazepam (Hypnodorm), lorazepam (Ativan), nitrazepam (Alodorm, Mogadon).



## What are benzodiazepines?

Benzodiazepines are a group of medicines that work in the central nervous system to produce effects including anti-anxiety, sedation, sleep and anti-seizure. They may also be used when you receive an anaesthetic in hospital. They are usually only effective for the first few weeks of treatment.

## Taking these medicines safely

If you have been prescribed one of these medicines:

- Only take the dose prescribed for you
- Don't share your medicine with anyone
- Check with your GP or pharmacist before using other medicines
- Let your pharmacist or GP know if you experience side effects such as memory loss, confusion, breathing problems, daytime sedation, anxiety, mood changes, balance problems or falls
- Talk to your GP, pharmacist or other health professional if you find the benzodiazepine medicine no longer helps to control your symptoms.

## How would I know if I am having problems with this medicine?

Possible signs of dependence:

- Taking the medicine in larger amounts or for longer than you're meant to
- Not being able to cut down or stop using the medicine
- Having cravings and urges to use the medicine

- Not managing to do what you should at work, home, or school because of your use of the medicine
- Its use causes problems in relationships
- Repeatedly using the medicine, even when it puts you in danger
- Needing more of the medicine to get the effect you want (eg. developing a tolerance)
- Having withdrawal symptoms that can be relieved by taking more of the medicine
- Experiencing symptoms similar to those for which the medicine was prescribed such as sleeping problems or anxiety



## Where can I find more information or help?

Talk to your GP, pharmacist or other health care professional if you are concerned about the medicines you take. Other services that can assist:

**Pharmaceutical Helpline**  
Tel: 1800 737 233

**Reconnexion**  
Tel: 1300 273 266

Specifically if you need help with Benzodiazepines

**Directline**  
Tel: 1800 888 236

**SafeScript**  
[www.health.vic.gov.au/safescript](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/safescript)

