



 Please call 911 if you think you have a medical emergency.

Benzodiazepine Abuse Treatment

Self-Care at Home

Drug abusers often deny their problem by playing down the extent of their drug use or blaming job or family stress. The most important thing that can be done at home is to recognize that there may be a problem and to seek help.

- Awareness of the signs and symptoms of abuse help with recognition.
- The next step is to try to obtain help for the person. This can be done either through your doctor or by contacting many of the drug abuse help lines in your community.

Medical Treatment

- Acute toxicity: The treatment required usually depends on what drugs were taken and how much. Often, you need only a period of evaluation in a hospital emergency department.
 - If the drugs were taken within the previous 1-2 hours, the doctor may consider gastric lavage. With this procedure, a large tube is placed directly into your stomach through the mouth. Large volumes of water can then be pushed into the stomach in an attempt to wash out the pill fragments. This is not used often and only if you are known to have swallowed other potentially more lethal medications.
 - A single dose of activated charcoal is recommended for people who come to the emergency department within 4 hours of taking drugs. This acts to prevent absorption of the medication. It is a black powder that is mixed with water and given to you to drink. Side effects can include nausea, vomiting, and abdominal cramps.
 - There is an antidote to counteract the toxic effects of benzodiazepines called flumazenil (or Romazicon). This reverses the sedative effect of benzodiazepines. It is, however, usually

reserved for severe poisoning because it can cause withdrawal and seizures in people who are chronic benzodiazepine abusers.

- Chronic abuse: The treatment of chronic abuse can usually be done at home with the help of your doctor or in specific drug rehabilitation centers. The first step consists of gradual reduction of benzodiazepines to prevent withdrawal and seizures. This is often much easier than the prolonged recovery phase in which the person attempts to stay drug free. In addition to the medical care, someone abusing these drugs often requires social support and help in finding housing and employment. The involvement of family and friends can be very helpful in this difficult stage.

more information from eMedicineHealth

- [When to Seek Medical Care](#)
- [Exams and Tests](#)
- [Next Steps](#)
- [Outlook](#)

For more information, read the complete article, Benzodiazepine Abuse (<http://www.emedicinehealth.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=58913>) on <http://www.emedicinehealth.com>.

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