

Addiction Part I: Benzodiazepine--side effects, abuse risk, and alternatives.

Longo, Lance P MD. *American Family Physician*. April 2000. Vol 61 (7).

Benzodiazepines are widely prescribed for a variety of conditions, particularly anxiety and insomnia. They are relatively safe and, with overdose, rarely result in death. However, used chronically, benzodiazepines can be addicting. These agents are often taken in combination with other drugs of abuse by patients with addiction disorders. In such patients, alternatives to benzodiazepines may be preferable and may include antidepressants, anticonvulsants, buspirone, antihypertensive agents and the newer neuroleptic medications. Caution must be used when prescribing benzodiazepines to patients with a current or remote history of substance abuse.