



Controlled drugs policy | Schedule IV medications

Benzodiazepines and controlled sleep medications

This includes but is not limited to Xanax (alprazolam), Klonopin (clonazepam), Valium (diazepam), Ativan (lorazepam), Ambien (zolpidem) Lunesta (eszopiclone), Halcion (triazolam), midazolam, estazolam, Restoril (temazepam)

This clinic manages controlled drugs with special care. Because they are only meant to be used for a short time, and addiction can occur after 2-3 weeks use, we try to limit their use as much as possible for your safety. These medications are not meant to be used long term except for very special circumstances. There are better treatments for anxiety, including therapy/counseling, and more appropriate medications that are not dangerous or habit forming. We only provide 1 month at a time, and only up to 3 months refillable. For example, if you take 4 pills a month, we write dispense #4 on the prescription.

Indication

XANAX (alprazolam) is indicated for the management of anxiety disorders and the short-term relief of symptoms of anxiety in adults. XANAX is also indicated for the treatment of panic disorder in adults with or without a fear of places and situations that might cause panic, helplessness, or embarrassment.

Side Effects

You don't have to use it for a long time to begin experiencing some of the negative effects of the medication. Some of the common effects of Xanax are trouble with cognitive skills and difficulty producing words properly. People using the prescription drug may slur their speech and sound like they are intoxicated when they speak. In larger quantities, the effects become more dramatic. Some people also become confused or disoriented when they take the medication.

Some of the common side effects of Xanax include:

Drowsiness	Dry mouth	Difficulty urinating
Headaches	Changes in sex drive	Constipation
Fatigue	Inability to perform sexually	Seizures
Dizziness	Increased salivation	Depression
Difficulty concentrating	Weight changes	Memory problems

Lasting Health Effects

Chronic use or abuse of sedatives is associated with:

- Cognitive deficits, Delirious states, Depression, Psychotic experiences.
- Aggressive and impulsive behavior (especially regarding xanax)



TENNESSEE FAMILY MEDICINE

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People who use Xanax for an extended period of time can experience long-term side effects. One of the very common long-term side effects is memory impairment. While the impairment is mild and it mostly affects your short-term memory, it can have a lasting effect. This occurs because it becomes difficult to maintain the needed levels of attention and concentration to receive and retain information from conversations or material that is read or observed. Another pronounced long-term effect is sedation. It is possible that people who use Xanax may experience periods of sedation that last up to 4 days. This sedation can be exacerbated by mixing Xanax with alcohol. Since each substance serves as a depressant, their combined effects are amplified. Because of this—and because of the aforementioned overdose risk—using alcohol while taking any benzodiazepine is never recommended.

If you continually use Xanax, especially in larger quantities, you can eventually develop a chemical dependency to the medication. When this happens, your body doesn't function properly without it. Of note, it is possible – if not likely – for someone to become physically dependent on the drug even when used as prescribed.

You can also experience withdrawal symptoms when you stop using Xanax. Some users may continue taking it to avoid the onset of these unpleasant, even life-threatening withdrawal symptoms. This may be an indication of addiction. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, addiction occurs when a chemical dependency is combined with a strong desire to consume the substance.

According to the Treatment Episode Data Set, the number of individuals seeking treatment for benzodiazepine abuse **almost tripled** from 1998-2008. Long-term abuse and addiction to Xanax are associated with depression, psychotic experiences, and aggressive or impulsive behavior.

According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, in 2011, there were over **1.2 Million** emergency department (ER) visits overall related to the nonmedical use of prescription drugs - Xanax was involved in 10 percent of those visits.

The number of emergency department visits involving the non-medical use of the sedative Xanax doubled from 57,419 to 124,902 during the years 2005 to 2010.

The most common drug combinations encountered in ER patients are Xanax and alcohol, and Xanax combined with opiate prescriptions like hydrocodone and oxycodone can be deadly.

So while everyone can agree that it is a tremendously effective group of medications for short term treatment of anxiety or insomnia, these are not safe drugs for long term use. Anyone that thinks they are the exception would be unwise to continue taking these dangerous medications as they are most likely to have a severe accident that could be fatal due to a false sense of security.