

**KNOW YOUR STUFF**

# BENZODIAZEPINES

AKA: benzos, downers, roofies, blues & ingredient/brand names  
(Drug names vary hugely, these are just a few examples)



## WHAT IS IT?

Tablets or capsules (and occasionally injections) containing one of the drugs within the benzodiazepine group, eg. diazepam, alprazolam, temazepam, or a similar ingredient such as etizolam which is chemically similar but even more potent.

## THE HIGHS

Slow down the brain and body, which can cause a sense of relaxation and calm, or sleepiness.

## THE LOWS

Can make the user feel confused, disorientated and unsteady, and drowsy to the point of falling asleep, experiencing short-term memory loss or losing consciousness. This can make the person extremely vulnerable, for example to injury or assault or robbery. There can also be negative effects on mental health, with a particularly high risk of suicidal thoughts in young people.

Repeated use can quickly lead to dependence, which means the person feels they need to take it at the same or a higher dose to feel normal. If they try to stop, there is a high chance of withdrawal symptoms, which can include tremors, nausea, vomiting, headaches, anxiety, panic attacks, depression and seizures.

Benzodiazepines are depressant drugs (sometimes called sedatives) which means that many painkillers, alcohol and any drugs that can also cause drowsiness increases the risk of dangerous side effects, overdose (which can compromise breathing and circulation) and death. It also doesn't mix well with drugs that seem to have an opposite effect, eg stimulants such as cocaine and ecstasy, as the effects of one of the drugs will dominate while the effects of the other will still be happening but won't be apparent – and this is extremely hazardous.

An added complication of benzodiazepines is that while they are sometimes prescribed (usually only short-term for relief of anxiety or insomnia) and may be diverted, most that are in circulation for recreational use are fake. This means their contents, purity and potency are unpredictable and therefore more risky.

It is illegal to possess or supply benzodiazepines (unless they have been prescribed by a healthcare professional such as a doctor), and being caught can result in a prison sentence and/or unlimited fine. It is also against the law – and dangerous – to drive under the influence.



For more information go to:

**FRANK**

<https://www.talktofrank.com/drug/benzodiazepines>



**DSM** foundation  
The drug education charity  
[www.dsmdfoundation.org.uk](http://www.dsmdfoundation.org.uk)

The Wellbeing Hub  
from Teen Tips  
[www.teentips.co.uk](http://www.teentips.co.uk)

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