

INFORMED CONSENT FOR CHRONIC BENZODIAZEPINES

We want to ensure that patients and caregivers have clear communication and safe, effective procedures when patients use benzodiazepines.

EFFECTIVENESS: For most patients with anxiety conditions, benzodiazepines are effective anxiety-relieving medications; however, it is possible benzodiazepines will not work well for you and your anxiety.

SAFETY: Most people can take these drugs safely, but some people do experience side effects.

SIDE EFFECTS: Most patients do not have serious side effects or drug interactions. Unfortunately, some do experience side effects and must stop the medication(s). Common side effects include sedation or lightheadedness. Less common reactions include trouble breathing (especially if you have emphysema/COPD or are on other narcotics), mental slowing and loss of coordination, lowering of sex drive, decreased testosterone (male sex hormone), and addiction.

Note: Pregnant women using benzodiazepines could make their newborn child dependent upon benzodiazepines. If you are pregnant, you need to alert your health care provider. You should not drive or operate machinery, if you cannot do so safely while taking medication.

DEPENDENCE: Dependence is not the same as addiction. Many people who take benzodiazepines daily will become dependent on them. Dependence is when your body adapts to the medication and then experiences withdrawal if the medication is stopped or lowered too quickly. Withdrawal symptoms include moodiness, aches and pains, sweating, diarrhea, abdominal pain, and even seizures.

ADDICTION: Addiction is not the same as dependence. While many people become dependent on daily benzodiazepines, only a small percentage of these people will become addicted. Addiction is characterized by behaviors such as loss of control of drug use, compulsive use and craving, and continued use despite harm or risk to the person. When people are addicted, they are not taking benzodiazepines simply to treat the anxiety.

GOALS: The goals of chronic anxiety treatment are to...

- improve your ability to function in your daily life.
- lower your anxiety.

TREATMENT OPTIONS:

- Medications
- Counseling
- Relaxation training
- Hypnosis and meditation

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO:

- Realize that benzodiazepine therapy is only one part of treatment.
- Use your medications ONLY as directed by your provider.
- Work with your provider and follow treatment recommendations in addition to taking prescribed medications.
- Keep all follow up appointments as instructed by your provider.
- Be completely honest and share all information regarding medication use, missed doses, side effects, and effectiveness of treatment, drug use, and alcohol use.
- Obtain prescriptions for any controlled substances*, including pain medications, anxiety medications, or stimulants from this doctor only unless exceptions noted below.

Patient Signature _____ Date ____/____/____

Patient Name (please print) _____ DOB ____/____/____

Physician Signature _____ Date ____/____/____

*Controlled substance examples: **Pain medications:** Ultram (tramadol), Vicodin/Norco/Lortab (hydrocodone), Percocet/Endocet (oxycodone), Tylenol #3 with codeine, morphine, MS Contin (morphine extended release), Duragesic patch (fentanyl), Stadol (butorphanol), Oxycontin (oxycodone extended release), etc. **Anxiety Medications:** Ativan (lorazepam), Xanax (alprazolam), Klonopin (clonazepam), Serax (oxazepam), Restoril (temazepam), Valium (diazepam), etc. **Stimulant Medications:** Ritalin (methylphenidate), Adderall (dextroamphetamine/amphetamine), Concerta (methylphenidate), Vyvanse (lisdexamfetamine), Focalin (dexmethylphenidate), etc.