

WHAT'S IT CALLED?

Examples and Slang Terms

Xanax, Valium, Klonopin and Ativan are some of the most commonly prescribed tranquilizer medications, and common slang terms for them are Benzos or Downers. Here are a few other medications and their slang terms:

Percocet: Perks or Percs

OxyContin: Oxy 80 and Oxycat

Demera^l or Morphine: Demmies and Miss Emma

WITHDRAWAL SYMPTOMS

Depending on the drug, many people can become addicted instantly, or they may build up an addiction over time. Regardless, many of the withdrawals are the same:

- Headaches
- Feeling nauseated and vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Sweating
- Anxiety
- Exhaustion but not being able to sleep

People are more likely to become instantly addicted to painkillers than tranquilizers, but that doesn't mean it can't happen to you.

MONUMENTAL MISTAKE

Mixing Tranquilizers and Painkillers

When used at the same time, tranquilizers and prescription pain relievers can produce an amplified high and extreme feeling of euphoria. However, since they are both depressants on the central nervous system, taking them together is often fatal. Your chances of heart failure, coma or even death are greatly increased when you combine tranquilizers with painkillers or alcohol. Even if you don't overdose and die, the mixture of the two very powerful drugs may cause you to become unaware of your surroundings, putting you in danger.

TEST YOURSELF

1. Barbiturates and benzodiazepines are the two major groups of painkillers.
a. True b. False
2. Painkillers are considered stimulants because they speed up the central nervous system.
a. True b. False
3. Which of the following is NOT a symptom of withdrawal of either painkillers and/or tranquilizers?
a. Anxiety b. Nausea
c. Feeling euphoric d. Headaches
4. "Downers" is a slang term for tranquilizer drugs—like Xanax or Ativan.
a. True b. False
5. Oxycat is the slang term for Percocet, which is a tranquilizer drug.
a. True b. False

TRANQUILIZERS & PAINKILLERS



Answers: 1.B 2.B 3.C 4.A 5.B

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DANGEROUS DOSES

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

Tranquilizers and painkillers were initially developed for very different functions, but they do have some similarities when it comes to how dangerous they can be and how they affect your body. There are two major types of tranquilizers: barbiturates and benzodiazepines. Barbiturates were initially created in the 1860s and were prescribed for sleep, anxiety and seizures. Because of how many people accidentally overdosed on barbiturates, scientists created another type of tranquilizer called benzodiazepines. Considered safer than barbiturates, most doctors today only prescribe benzodiazepines as an anti-anxiety medication, as a muscle relaxant, for convulsions and for insomnia.

Most painkillers are considered opiates, meaning they are derived from the opium plant. Their main function is to act on the central nervous system to relieve pain. Typically prescribed for temporary use after surgery or an injury, painkillers are safe when used exactly how your doctor prescribes them, which is most likely for a short time and in small doses.

WHAT ARE THE SIMILARITIES?

Plenty! Painkillers and tranquilizers are both depressants, meaning they slow down your central nervous system and the rest of your body. Although tranquilizers are more commonly referred to as sedatives than painkillers, painkillers do have sedative qualities. They both slow down brain and muscular activity to produce a calming effect. Also, painkillers and tranquilizers both have many of the same short-term and long-term effects, and they are both very addictive.



SHORT TERM EFFECTS

As previously mentioned, both tranquilizers and painkillers have many of the same short term effects. These include:

- Euphoria
- Drowsiness/Fatigue
- Confusion
- Dizziness
- Hallucinations
- Lethargy
- Poor motor function
- Dry mouth
- Delirium
- Slowed breathing



LONG TERM EFFECTS

Physical dependence or even addiction may occur with continued use, and subsequent withdrawal symptoms may occur when the person attempts to reduce use or stop cold turkey. Other long term effects may include:

- Paranoia attacks
- Shifts in personality
- Feelings of rage or extreme aggressiveness
- Dulled emotional responses

BEHAVIORAL CHANGES

You or someone you know may have a problem. Reach out to them if you see any of the following behavioral changes; they may indicate long-term tranquilizer or painkiller abuse.

- They "shop for doctors"—meaning they keep getting multiple prescriptions from various doctors.
- Extra pill bottles appearing in the trash
- Financial problems
- Social withdrawal/isolation
- Dramatically changing moods

YOLANDA'S STORY

Yolanda suffered with seizures basically her entire life. She had tried dozens of different types of anticonvulsants, but she just couldn't get her epilepsy to a manageable level. Her doctor finally said, "Let's try this new drug. It's stronger than what you might be used to, but if it works, you may never have another seizure again." As her doctor's voice faded into the background, rattling off all of the possible side effects, Yolanda could only think how excited she was. "Finally! A normal life. I can go back to college and hang out with my friends," Yolanda thought gleefully to herself.

"Did you hear what I said, Yolanda?" said her doctor, a little annoyed. She must have been talking for a long time while Yolanda was fantasizing about finally getting some independence. "Yeah, yeah. Loud and clear," Yolanda responded.

After picking up the prescription from the pharmacist, Yolanda was so excited to try her new medication, but she felt a little disoriented and kind of loopy soon after; she had never been high before, but she imagined this must be what it feels like. "Something's not right," she thought to herself. Confused, dizzy, and suddenly very tired, Yolanda looked again at the prescription bottle and realized she had taken way too much. Her dad found her passed out on the floor, barely breathing. Yolanda died shortly after arriving at the hospital. The dose she took was just too much for her body to endure.

