



JOB AID

Drugs and Alcohol: The Facts **About Depressants**

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Depressants affect the central nervous system by slowing down messages between the brain and the body. They can affect concentration and coordination and slow down a person's ability to respond to unexpected situations. It can cause lost workdays, industrial fatalities and accidents, and prolonged recovery from injury and illness.

Alcohol

Blood alcohol content (BAC) indicates the level of alcohol in a person's bloodstream. The higher the level, the greater the impairment. The impact of alcohol varies with gender, age, weight, other drugs in a person's system and tolerance. Drivers with a BAC over the legal limit are more likely to be involved in accidents. ALWAYS HAVE A DESIGNATED DRIVER!

Effects of Alcohol

- Feeling relaxed
- Less inhibited
- Trouble concentrating
- Slower reflexes

Symptoms of Overdose

- Confusion
- Blurred vision
- Clumsiness
- Memory loss
- Nausea, vomiting
- Passing out, coma, death

Interactions with Other Drugs

Avoid:

- Alcohol + cannabis
- Alcohol + energy drinks (with caffeine), crystal meth, amphetamines or ecstasy
- Alcohol + gamma hydroxybutyrate (GHB) or benzodiazepines

Benzodiazepines

Benzodiazepines are minor tranquilizers usually prescribed by a physician to relieve stress and anxiety and to help people sleep:

- Usually, a pill or tablet
- Vary in color and shape
- Often called benzos, downers, xannies

Effects of Benzodiazepines

- Reduced stress
- Feelings of isolation or euphoria
- Impaired thinking/memory loss
- Lack of motivation
- Skin rashes
- Vein damage, scarring and infection (if injected)

Symptoms of Overdose

- Over-sedation
- Jitteriness
- Mood swings/aggression
- Slow, shallow breathing
- Unconsciousness, coma, death

Interactions with Other Drugs

Avoid:

- Benzodiazepines + alcohol or opiates (such as heroin)
- Benzodiazepines + some pharmaceutical drugs

Kava

Kava is made from the root or stump of the kava shrub. It has similar sedative and muscle-relaxant effects as alcohol. It comes in different forms: Brownish-colored drink, brown powder and capsules.

- Do NOT take kava if you plan to drive or use heavy machinery
- Do NOT take kava with alcohol or benzodiazepines

Gamma-hydroxybutyric acid (GHB)

GHB is known as the "date rape" drug.

- Often called: Liquid X, liquid ecstasy, Georgia home boy, goop, soap and scoop
- White powder normally dissolved in a liquid
- Causes an increase in libido, decreased anxiety, excited and aggressive behavior, amnesia
- Takes effect in 15-30 minutes and lasts 4-6 hours

Opiates

Opioids are a class of drugs naturally found in the opium poppy plant and block pain signals between the brain and the body.

- Come in a variety of forms and colors (pill, liquid, patch)
- May be ingested or injected
- Often called downers, OCs, ox, oxy

Most commonly abused opioids are prescription opioids, such as Vicodin, Oxycontin, Fentanyl and Heroin.

Misuse of opioids can lead to opioid use disorder. Common signs of addiction include increased drowsiness or fatigue, rapid weight loss, frequent flu-like symptoms and lack of hygiene or self-care. Addicts may become isolated from family, friends and social events or experience financial difficulties.

Prescription opioid overdose deaths often involve drug interactions with benzodiazepines so avoid taking these drugs together.

Seek treatment from a medical professional if you or someone you know is struggling with an opioid or other drug addiction. In the U.S., dial 988 or visit the suicide and crisis lifeline at <https://988lifeline.org> to connect with trained counselors who can help. Similar lifelines exist in other countries.

Over the Counter (OTC) Drugs

Dextromethorphan (DXM) in OTC drugs produces euphoria when abused. Warning signs of OTC drug abuse include missing medications, negative work performance, changes in hobbies or interests and visits to internet sites to find out how to get "high" from OTC drugs.