

Safe and Effective Medication Approaches for Anxiety and Insomnia

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- ⊕ Anxiety is a normal human response to uncertainty, and we all have it.
- ⊕ Majority of anxious moments are a by-product of imagined fear.
- ⊕ Most of us experience anxiety intermittently; when chronic, it rises to disorder proportions.

Symptoms of Anxiety

- ⊕ Nervousness, tension
- ⊕ Poor attention and concentration
- ⊕ Tachycardia
- ⊕ Sweating, cold hands or feet
- ⊕ Shortness of breath
- ⊕ Trembling feeling
- ⊕ Dizziness
- ⊕ Insomnia
- ⊕ Diarrhea, frequent urination or both

Anxiety Disorders

Panic Disorder

- ⊕ Brief, intense surges of anxiety
- ⊕ Two sides of the panic disorder coin
- ⊕ Considerable worry as to when the next attack will occur
- ⊕ Usually very responsive to medication

Generalized Anxiety Disorder

- ⊕ Chronic low-level anxiety without panic
- ⊕ Often numerous physical complaints
- ⊕ Chronic worry in spite of no objective stressors
- ⊕ Medication management often reduces rumination and worry

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder

- ⊕ Series of persistent thoughts and compulsions accompanied by shame, guilt, and self-doubt
- ⊕ Common obsessions: contamination and safety
- ⊕ Obsessions are anxiety producing; compulsions are anxiety reducing
- ⊕ Chronic condition with considerable suffering, often incapacitating
- ⊕ Likely etiology

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Most often, PTSD resolves on its own

Symptoms of PTSD

Persistent Re-experiencing of the Trauma

- ⊕ Distressing, intrusive recollections (images, affects, cognitions)
- ⊕ Recurring nightmares regarding the trauma
- ⊕ “Flashbacks” or déjà vu (sensations as if the traumatic episode were happening in the present)

Increased Arousal

- ⊕ Sleep disturbances
- ⊕ Startle response
- ⊕ Irritability
- ⊕ Hypervigilance

Dissociative Symptoms

- ⊕ Derealization
- ⊕ Hallucinations (visual or auditory)

Avoidance

- ⊕ Avoiding discussion of traumatic events
- ⊕ Avoiding activities or people or places that could provoke recollections of the trauma
- ⊕ General social withdrawal

Numbing

- ⊕ Blunted affective response
- ⊕ Feelings of emptiness
- ⊕ Feelings of estrangement or detachment
- ⊕ Delirium
- ⊕ Compensatory mechanism for losing control

Antianxiety Agents

Benzodiazepines	
Generic Name	Brand Name
Diazepam	Valium
Chlordiazepoxide	Librium
Flurazepam	Dalmane
Clorazepate	Tranxene
Clonazepam	Klonopin
Temazepam	Restoril
Lorazepam	Ativan
Alprazolam	Xanax
Triazolam	Halcion

Benzodiazepine Facts

- ⊕ Tolerance and dependence can occur
- ⊕ Time-limited use (1-2 weeks)
- ⊕ Risk of dependency associated with dose and duration of use
- ⊕ Considerable danger if combined with alcohol
- ⊕ Way overprescribed
- ⊕ Compliance and placebo rates are high

Buspirone (Buspar®)

- ⊕ Only clinical use for treatment of generalized anxiety
- ⊕ Non-benzodiazepine: no risk of dependence
- ⊕ No potentiation with alcohol

Beta Blockers

- ⊕ Inderal®, Toprol®
- ⊕ Used to treat hypertension
- ⊕ Effective for performance anxiety

**Side Effects of the
Anti-Anxiety Agents**

- ⊕ Sedation
- ⊕ Slurred speech
- ⊕ Coordination problems
- ⊕ Memory disturbance
- ⊕ Disinhibition – especially with alcohol

Insomnia

- ⊕ A better word for it is sleeplessness.
- ⊕ If you aren't sleeping well, confront yourself.
- ⊕ Think medical first.
 - ⊕ Breathing difficulty?
 - ⊕ Pain?
 - ⊕ Restless legs?
- ⊕ What's going on between your ears?
- ⊕ Meds are not the first line of defense for insomnia.

If the following seems like
common sense, that's
because it is!

Sleep Sabotage

- ⊕ Anything with an "I"
- ⊕ A light-filled room
- ⊕ Temperature
- ⊕ An overstuffed po-boy
- ⊕ Alcohol, caffeine, decongestants
- ⊕ Movies

Sleep Induction

- ⊕ If we prepare for our day, why not prepare for bedtime?
- ⊕ If it has an On/Off switch, choose "Off" 30 minutes before bedtime.
- ⊕ Comfortable room temperature for you.
- ⊕ Pray, meditate, soothing or boring literature.
- ⊕ Take all medication one hour before bedtime.
- ⊕ Tire the mind and body.
- ⊕ If you do nothing else, get the room as dark as possible.

Pharmaceutical Sleeps Aids

- ⊕ When taken responsibly, they are safe and effective.
- ⊕ What do you want the drug to do and for how long?
- ⊕ Take for 2-3 days, assess results.
- ⊕ Insomnia is often temporary.

Controlled Substances

- ⊕ Ambien®
- ⊕ Ambien CR®
- ⊕ Lunesta® (Follow the wings)
- ⊕ Intermezzo® (Very short acting Ambien®)

Non Controlled Substances

- ⊕ Melatonin OTC
- ⊕ Melatonin (Rozerem®)
- ⊕ Benadryl®

Some anxiety is good for us!


