



New benzodiazepines – bromazolam

The benzodiazepine market in Scotland is changing. Bromazolam is now the most commonly detected drug in street benzodiazepines (benzos). It's a new psychoactive substance first detected in Scotland in 2021.

Bromazolam produces strong sedative and sleep-inducing effects and as a result there is a substantial risk of overdose.

Detections of other novel benzos, such as flubromazepam and gidazepam, have also increased.

Alert for: people taking benzos from a non-prescribed source.

Cascade to: drug and alcohol services, emergency services, healthcare and high-risk settings including prisons.

Bromazolam mis-sold as diazepam.

Photo credit: WEDINOS, W032610



Bromazolam is sold as a 'street benzo'. It is most commonly detected in:

- blue or white circular pills
- white, green or teal bars, stamped with 'XANAX'
- off-white, tan or brown powder (in prisons).

It is also found in fake medicines – illegally produced drugs designed to look like real medicines (with counterfeit packaging). It has been seized in community and custodial settings and implicated in overdoses and deaths in different areas of the country.

Adverse effects

- agitation
- confusion
- drowsiness
- loss of coordination
- memory loss and blackouts
- reduced consciousness

Benzodiazepine harm reduction

- Test before use. Use the drug testing service www.wedinos.org
- Dose low. Take a test dose (small part of pill or paper) and leave as long as possible between doses.
- Avoid mixing with other drugs, particularly other depressants such as alcohol, opioids and gabapentinoids. This significantly increases the risk of overdose.
- Use in company. Stay with people who can respond in an emergency.

Overdose signs

- unconsciousness (won't wake with a shout or a shake)
- unable to speak or respond
- shallow (or slowed) breathing
- snoring or rasping breaths
- blue lips
- pale skin
- nausea and vomiting
- seizures

In an emergency

Always get help quickly – stay calm, call 999 and ask for an ambulance. Give as much information as you can and be honest about what was taken.

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Contact

To make a report or find out more visit www.publichealthscotland.scot/RADAR or email p hs.drugsradar@p hs.scot