

# Information about Tranquillisers and Sleeping Pills

Many people have problems with anxiety, stress and sleeping well.

Doctors sometimes prescribe sleeping pills and tranquillisers to help these problems.

Some common names of tranquillisers and sleeping pills are:

- Xanax
- Temazepam
- Valium
- Serepax
- Normison

Tranquillisers and sleeping pills can help to relieve the feelings of anxiety and assist sleep. However, they are only safe to use for short periods of time.

The National Health and Medical Research Council recommend that tranquillisers and sleeping pills should not be taken for any longer than two to three weeks.

The human body quickly becomes used to taking tranquillisers and physical dependence to the drug can develop.

People taking tranquillisers or sleeping pills for long periods of time can have painful withdrawal symptoms when cutting down or stopping the tablets.

Other problems that can result from long term use of tranquillisers and sleeping pills are:

- Increased risk of accidents and falls
- Increased anxiety
- Worsening sleep
- Depression

As the tranquillisers or sleeping pills can only be used safely for short periods of time, people are advised to look for other help for problems of anxiety, stress and sleep. Good assistance can be found at your local Community Health Service, Women's Health Service, by talking to your doctor, or ringing Reconnexion's Telephone Information and Support service on 1300 273 266.

There are many effective ways to help with anxiety, stress and difficulty sleeping. Some things that people find helpful are relaxation and meditation techniques, talking to a counselor or health practitioner or herbal and natural remedies.

If you are concerned that you have been taking tranquillisers or sleeping pills for longer than the recommended length of time, do NOT stop taking them suddenly. Severe withdrawal symptoms can occur if this happens. The dose of the tranquilliser needs to be cut down slowly with advice and assistance from your doctor.

Other drugs which are not tranquillisers are sometimes prescribed for anxiety, stress and sleep problems. If you are concerned about the drugs you are taking, please be sure to check with your doctor.

Ask for an interpreter if you need one when you make an appointment with your doctor.

For further information, referral or assistance, phone Reconnexion on 1300 273 266 or 9886 9400 or the agency listed below.

