

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT: **OPIOIDS & BENZODIAZEPINES**



WHAT ARE OPIOIDS?

Opioids are powerful medicines that help you manage your pain. Common opioid pain medicines are Oxycontin®, Vicodin®, and Percocet®. Check with your provider to find out if you have an opioid prescription.

WHAT ARE BENZODIAZEPINES?

Benzodiazepines (benzos) are also powerful medicines that help manage insomnia, seizures, and anxiety. Common benzos are Xanax®, Klonopin®, Ativan®, and Valium®. Check with your doctor to find out if you have a benzo prescription.



WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF TAKING BOTH?

Taking opioids and benzos together even for a short time can be dangerous because both medications can slow down the central nervous system, which controls the functions of the brain and spinal cord. This combination can lead to extreme sleepiness, slow or difficulty breathing, coma, or death.

WHAT IF I AM TAKING BOTH?

Your provider may decide to limit prescribing both at the same time or recommend alternatives, and will help make a plan that effectively manages your pain AND your condition treated by the benzo.

WHAT IF I HAVE TO TAKE BOTH?

Your provider may have you take both if other options for managing pain and/or anxiety/depression are not a good fit for you. Your provider will adjust the dosage and monitor you closely.

IF YOU ARE TAKING BOTH YOU SHOULD KNOW:

- Tell your provider all the medicines you are taking, including other prescriptions or over-the-counter medicines.
- Take the dose as instructed by your provider.
- Do not use alcohol with medications, as this can triple their effects.
- Call your provider if you experience any of these symptoms:
 - Drowsiness
 - Dizziness
 - Slow or difficult breathing
 - Nausea
 - Vomiting
 - Constipation
 - Weakness
- Do not drive or operate heavy machinery until you know how the medicine will affect you.
- If you don't know whether you are taking medicines that may interact, ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist.