

Opioids and Benzodiazepines

JUST SAY “NO” TO THE COMBO

Concurrent Use of Opioids and Benzodiazepines is a dangerous combination-

- Between 2001 and 2013, concurrent use of opioids and benzodiazepine drugs increased 80%¹
- Concurrent users had twice the risk of an emergency department visit or inpatient admission for opioid overdose
- About 30% of fatal opioid overdoses occurred in people also using benzodiazepines

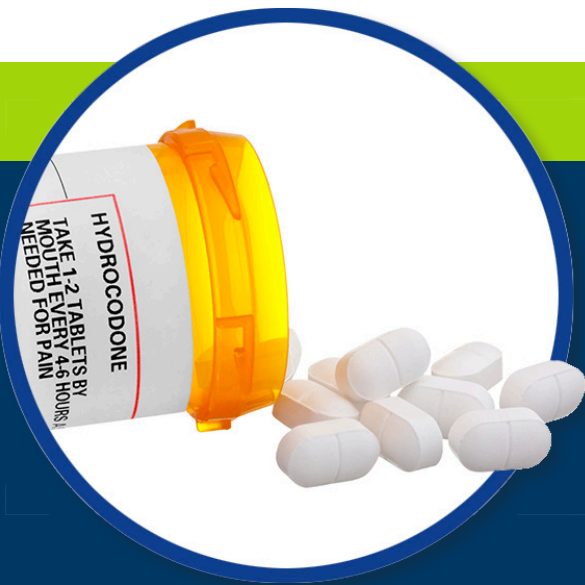
In 2016, the FDA issued a [serious warning](#) against concurrent use of these drug classes²

WHY IS THIS A PROBLEM?

- Opioids and Benzodiazepines both depress the central nervous system
- Common side effects of opioids and benzodiazepines include drowsiness, dizziness, dependence/misuse/abuse
- Concurrent use, even at prescribed doses, increases the risk of significant respiratory depression and increases the risk of opioid overdose

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Use your state’s prescription drug monitoring database to identify all controlled drugs patients may be taking
- Use [opioid screening tools](#) to identify patients at high risk for adverse events, dependence
- Consider [non-narcotic alternatives](#) and [non-pharmacologic alternatives](#) to treatment
- If the drugs must be used, use minimum effective doses for the shortest duration possible
- Teach patients to [recognize opioid adverse effects](#) and symptoms of overdose such as sedation, difficulty breathing
- Do not withhold opioid medication assisted treatment in persons on benzodiazepines however manage combined use closely³



80%

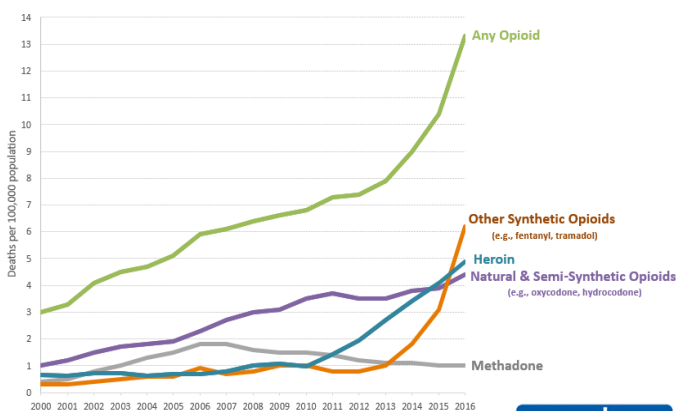
increase in concurrent use of opioids and benzodiazepines



30%

of fatal opioid overdoses occur with benzodiazepines

Overdose Deaths Involving Opioids, by Type of Opioid, United States, 2000-2016



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SOURCE: CDC/NCHS, National Vital Statistics System, Mortality. CDC WONDER, Atlanta, GA: US Department of Health and Human Services, CDC, 2017.

<https://wonder.cdc.gov/>

1. Sun EC, et al. Association between concurrent use of prescription opioids and benzodiazepines and overdose: a retrospective analysis. *BMJ*. 2017;356:j760. [cited 2018 1.31.18 Available from: www.bmj.com/content/356/bmj.j760
2. www.fda.gov/Drugs/DrugSafety/ucm518473.htm
3. www.fda.gov/downloads/Drugs/DrugSafety/UCM576377.pdf

This material was prepared by Quality Insights, the Medicare Quality Innovation Network-Quality Improvement Organization for West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Delaware, New Jersey and Louisiana under contract with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The contents presented do not necessarily reflect CMS policy. Publication number QI-C36-041918