Mixing alcohol and Xanax (benzodiazepines)?

Dear Alice,

Is it ok to drink alcohol while taking xanex?

Answer

Dear Reader,

Mixing alcohol with other drugs, including Xanax and other prescription medications, can increase blood alcohol concentration (BAC) levels, impacting the way you feel while drinking. While there is no way to know exactly how drinking alcohol while using another substance will affect each person, some common effects can include dizziness or fainting, impaired coordination, dangerous rise in blood pressure, nausea, vomiting, convulsions, and increased risk for severe alcohol poisoning.

Usually prescribed to treat anxiety and panic disorders, alprazolam is the generic term for Xanax, a psychoactive drug that belongs to a family of chemicals called benzodiazepines. These chemicals, which are frequently referred to as ?benzos,? depress the central nervous system and induce sedative and muscle relaxant effects similar to those of alcohol. Alcohol and benzodiazepines cause cognitive impairment when consumed separately and when consumed together, the substances have a cumulative effect.

A precautionary note: benzodiazepine and alcohol affect individuals differently according to variables such as gender, body weight, type of alcohol, amount eaten before or during drinking, rate at which alcohol is consumed, and dosage. Benzodiazepine tolerance may lessen the sedative effects of the drug when consumed alone or with alcohol, and risk may be overestimated for long time users. Mood is another factor that can influence the way individuals react to the combination of alcohol and other substances, although it does not affect BAC directly.

Relatedly, taking Xanax while on stimulants can also cause unintended effects. One drug is telling the body to speed up heart rate and elevate blood pressure, while the other is telling the body to do just the opposite. Under this kind of stress, the body can react in unpredictable ways.

If you are seeking more information about alcohol and how it may interact with any medications you take, you can make an appointment with your health care provider. If you?d like to seek support from a psychologist or psychiatrist to discuss anxiety, stress, or
benzodiazepines, talk to your health care provider about getting you a referral to a mental health professional.

Take care,

Alice!

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