**NURSING PROCESS FOCUS**  Clients Receiving Benzodiazepine and Nonbenzodiazepine Antianxiety Therapy

### Assessment

Prior to administration:
- Obtain complete health history (both physical and mental), including allergies and drug history for possible drug interactions.
- Identify factors that precipitate anxiety or insomnia.
- Assess likelihood of drug abuse and dependence.
- Establish baseline vital signs and level of consciousness.

### Potential Nursing Diagnoses

- Injury, Risk for
- Anxiety
- Noncompliance
- Knowledge, Deficient, related to drug therapy
- Coping, Ineffective
- Sleep Pattern, Disturbed
- Activity Intolerance, Risk for

### Planning: Client Goals and Expected Outcomes

The client will:
- Report absence or decrease (use scale) of physical and behavioral manifestations of anxiety.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the drug’s action by accurately describing drug side effects and precautions.
- Verbalize the need to discuss with the healthcare provider any intention to discontinue the drug and the importance of not withdrawing the drug abruptly.
- Report ability to tolerate usual activities of daily living without excessive drowsiness and fatigue.

### Implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interventions and (Rationales)</th>
<th>Client Education/Discharge Planning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monitor vital signs. Observe respiratory patterns, especially during sleep, for evidence of apnea or shallow breathing. (Benzodiazepines can reduce the respiratory drive in susceptible clients.)</td>
<td>Instruct client to consult the healthcare provider before taking this drug if snoring is a problem. Snoring may indicate an obstruction in the upper respiratory tract resulting in hypoxia. Teach client to monitor vital signs at home, especially respirations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor neurological status, especially level of consciousness. (Confusion or lack of response may indicate overmedication.)</td>
<td>Instruct client to report extreme lethargy, slurred speech, disorientation, or ataxia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure client safety. (Drug may cause excessive drowsiness and increase risk for injury.)</td>
<td>Instruct client to: Avoid driving or performing hazardous activities until effects of drug are known. Request assistance when getting up of bed and walking until effect of medication is known.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor the client’s intake of stimulants, including caffeine (in beverages such as coffee, tea, cola and other soft drinks, and OTC analgesics such as Excedrin), and nicotine from tobacco products and nicotine patches. (These products can reduce the drug’s effectiveness.)</td>
<td>Instruct client to: Avoid taking OTC sleep-inducing antihistamines, such as diphenhydramine. Contact the healthcare provider before self-medicating with any OTC preparation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor affect and emotional status. (Drug may increase risk of mental depression, especially in clients with suicidal tendencies.)</td>
<td>Instruct client to: Report significant mood changes, especially depression. Avoid consumption of alcohol and other CNS depressants while on benzodiazepines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid abrupt discontinuation of therapy. (Withdrawal symptoms, including rebound anxiety and sleeplessness, are possible with abrupt discontinuation after long-term use.)</td>
<td>Instruct client to: Take drug exactly as prescribed. Keep all follow-up appointments as directed by healthcare provider to monitor response to medication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assess prior methods of stress reduction. Reinforce previously used effective methods and teach new coping skills. (This will assist client to use medications for the shortest time possible and build self-confidence.)</td>
<td>Instruct client to use nonpharmacological methods for reestablishing sleep regimen.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Evaluation of Outcome Criteria

Evaluate the effectiveness of drug therapy by confirming that client goals and expected outcomes have been met (see “Planning”).
- The client reports a decrease in physical and behavioral manifestations of anxiety.
- The client demonstrates an understanding of the drug’s actions by accurately describing drug side effects and precautions.
- The client verbalizes the importance of not discontinuing the drug abruptly.
- The client reports the ability to tolerate usual activities of daily living without excessive drowsiness and fatigue.

∞ See Tables 14.2 and 14.4 for lists of drugs to which these nursing actions apply.