

Confusion/Amnesia

Confucius with Memory-eraser

Two particularly significant sites affected by diazepam (Valium) are the hippocampus and cerebral cortex. By acting on these areas, confusion and amnesia can occur. It is important to note that at higher doses, diazepam may cause sufficient sedation to result in patients becoming stuporous.

Urinary Incontinence

Urine In-continents

In some patients, urinary incontinence may occur while taking diazepam (Valium). This may be a result of its muscular relaxant effect discussed earlier and/or diminished awareness about the need to urinate.

Behavioral Changes

Delta Behavior

Some individuals may experience a paradoxical effect when taking diazepam (Valium). While reactions vary, these patients may experience agitation, loss of impulse control and/or aggression.

Respiratory Depression

Deflated Lungs

As a CNS depressant, diazepam (Valium) administration may also result in respiratory depression, the effects of which are amplified when used in combination with other CNS depressants (alcohol, opioids, etc.). Monitor patient's breathing pattern and oxygen saturation when high doses or multiple doses are being administered.

Antidote

Flumazenil (Romazicon)

Flute-mace-nail

Flumazenil (Romazicon) is the reversal agent for benzodiazepines like diazepam (Valium). Prompt administration is imperative in cases of overdose or vital sign destabilization.

Nursing Considerations

Fall Precaution

Falling Precaution-sign

Creating a "safe" exit from the bed is important to eliminate potential falls. Educate the patient on the potential for falls and how to prevent falls while on this medication. Assist the patient to the bathroom when needed.

Do Not Stop Abruptly

Can't stop Cold-turkey

Patients that use benzodiazepines like diazepam (Valium) at home should not abruptly stop their medication. They should be tapered off to prevent any withdrawal symptoms. Signs of withdrawal syndrome include altered mental status, anxiety, tachycardia, and vomiting.