

# ❖❖ Anxiolytics & Sleep Aids: Your Calm & Sleep Dream Team!

## ❖❖ Meet Your Anxiety & Sleep Squad!

Quick reference for choosing the perfect relaxation and sleep helpers! ✨

### ♀ Non-Addictive Anxiety Fighters

"We help you chill without the addiction risk!"

#### ❖❖ Buspirone (Buspar): "The Patient Peacekeeper"

❖❖ **Superpower:** GAD specialist, no addiction potential

⌚ **Patience needed:** Takes 2-4 weeks to work (not instant!)

❖❖ **Best for:** Generalized anxiety, patients with addiction

history ❖❖ **Dosing:** BID to TID (2-3 times daily)

❖❖ **Pro tip:** Tell patients "This isn't Xanax - it takes time but it's worth it!"

#### ❖❖ Hydroxyzine (Vistaril): "The Antihistamine Anxiety Fighter"

❖❖ **Superpower:** Fast-acting anxiety relief + sleep help

❖❖ **Side effects:** Sedation (that's often the point!), dry mouth

❖❖ **Best for:** Acute anxiety, PRN use, sleep trouble

❖❖ **Pro tip:** Great alternative to benzos for immediate relief!

### ❖❖ Performance & Trauma

## Specialists "We handle specific anxiety situations!"

### ❖❖ Propranolol (Inderal): "The Stage Fright Slayer"

❖❖ **Superpower:** Blocks physical anxiety symptoms

❖❖ **Best for:** Performance anxiety, presentations, social situations  **Timing:** Take 30-60 minutes before the event

 **Watch out for:** Low blood pressure, slow heart rate

❖❖ **Pro tip:** Perfect for musicians, public speakers, test-takers!

### ❖❖ Prazosin (Minipress): "The Nightmare Terminator"

❖❖ **Superpower:** Stops PTSD nightmares and night sweats

❖❖ **Best for:** PTSD nightmares, trauma-related sleep issues

❖❖ **Starting dose:** 1mg (start low!)

 **Watch out for:** Dizziness when standing up

❖❖ **Pro tip:** Game-changer for veterans and trauma survivors!

## ❖❖ Sleep Specialists (Off-Label

### Heroes) "We're antidepressants by day, sleep aids by

night!"

### ❖❖ Trazodone (Desyrel): "The Sleepy Antidepressant"

❖❖ **Superpower:** Excellent sleep aid, some antidepressant effect  **Sleep dose:** 25-150mg at bedtime (Puckey, 2024)

❖❖ **Best for:** Insomnia, especially with depression

 **Rare but serious:** Priapism (prolonged erection - medical

emergency!)  **Pro tip:** Most commonly prescribed sleep aid in psychiatry!

## **Mirtazapine (Remeron): "The Appetite & Sleep Booster"**

 **Superpower:** Sleep + appetite + mood improvement

 **Dosing paradox:** Lower doses (7.5-15mg) = more sedating (Jilani et al., 2024)

 **Best for:** Underweight patients, elderly, depression +

insomnia  **Pro tip:** Perfect for patients who need to gain weight!

## **Benzodiazepines: The "Handle with Extreme Care" Squad**

"We're effective but dangerous - use us wisely!"

### **The Benzo Brigade:**

**Lorazepam (Ativan):** Short-acting, clean elimination

**Clonazepam (Klonopin):** Long-acting, good for panic

**Alprazolam (Xanax):** Fast-acting, high addiction potential

### **Benzo Safety Protocols:**

#### BENZODIAZEPINE DANGER ZONE

##### **AVOID IN:**

- History of substance abuse
- Elderly patients (fall risk)
- Respiratory problems
- Pregnancy

##### **TIME LIMITS:**

- Maximum 2-4 weeks continuous use
- PRN use preferred over daily
- Taper slowly when discontinuing

◆◆ APPROPRIATE USES:

- Panic attacks (short-term)
- Severe acute anxiety
- Alcohol withdrawal
- Seizure disorders

## ◆◆ Quick Selection Guide!

◆◆ Generalized Anxiety: Buspirone (first choice!)

◆◆ Panic Attacks: Hydroxyzine or benzos

(short-term) ◆◆ Performance Anxiety: Propranolol

◆◆ PTSD Nightmares: Prazosin

◆◆ Insomnia + Depression: Trazodone or

Mirtazapine ◆◆ Insomnia Only: Trazodone (low

dose)

◆◆ Elderly Insomnia: Trazodone or Mirtazapine (avoid

benzos!) Need Weight Gain: Mirtazapine

## ◆◆ Safety Comparison Chart!

◆◆ Safest Options (Low Risk):

**Buspirone:** No addiction, no withdrawal

**Hydroxyzine:** Antihistamine, generally safe

**Propranolol:** Beta-blocker, well-tolerated

### ◆◆ Moderate Risk:

**Trazodone:** Priapism risk (rare), next-day grogginess

**Mirtazapine:** Weight gain, sedation

**Prazosin:** Orthostatic hypotension

### ◆◆ High Risk (Use with Caution):

**All Benzodiazepines:** Addiction, withdrawal, falls, cognitive impairment

## ◆◆ Pro Tips for Anxiety & Sleep Success!

### ◆◆ Starting Strategies:

**Start with non-addictive options first**

**Set realistic expectations** (some take weeks to work)

**Address sleep hygiene** alongside medications

**Consider therapy** (CBT-I for insomnia, CBT for anxiety)

### ◆◆ Patient Education:

**"Buspirone takes 2-4 weeks - be patient!"**

**"Trazodone may cause morning grogginess initially"**

**"Propranolol works best taken before stressful events"**

**"Benzos are for short-term use only"**

### ◆◆ Red Flag Warnings:

**Priapism with trazodone:** "Go to ER immediately!"

**Severe dizziness with prazosin:** "Get up slowly!"

**Benzo withdrawal:** "Never stop suddenly!"

**Respiratory depression:** "Don't mix with alcohol!"

## ❖❖ Switching Strategies:

**From benzos:** Taper slowly, substitute with buspirone/hydroxyzine

**Sleep aids not working:** Consider sleep study, address underlying

issues **Side effects:** Lower dose or switch to different class

## ❖❖ Special Situations!

### ❖❖ Elderly Patients:

#### ❖❖ ELDERLY-FRIENDLY OPTIONS ❖❖

##### ✓ PREFERRED:

- Trazodone (low dose)
- Mirtazapine (appetite benefit)
- Hydroxyzine (short-term)

##### ⚠ USE CAUTION:

- Buspirone (slower metabolism)
- Propranolol (check heart function)

##### ✗ AVOID:

- Benzodiazepines (fall risk, cognitive impairment) - High-dose anything

### ❖❖ Pregnancy Considerations:

#### ❖❖ PREGNANCY SAFETY GUIDE ❖❖

##### ✓ SAFER OPTIONS:

- Hydroxyzine (Category B)
- Low-dose propranolol (**if** needed)

##### ⚠ USE CAUTION:

- Trazodone (limited data)
- Buspirone (limited data)

##### ✗ AVOID:

- Benzodiazepines (especially first trimester) - Mirtazapine (weight gain concerns)

### ❖❖ Substance Use History:

## ◆◆ ADDICTION-SAFE OPTIONS ◆◆

### ✓ FIRST CHOICES:

- Buspirone (no abuse potential)
- Hydroxyzine (no abuse potential)
- Propranolol (no abuse potential)
- Prazosin (no abuse potential)

### ⚠ CAUTION:

- Trazodone (minimal abuse potential)
- Mirtazapine (minimal abuse potential)

### ✗ ABSOLUTELY AVOID:

- All benzodiazepines
- Z-drugs (zolpidem, etc.)

## ◆◆ The Bottom Line!

**Your anxiety and sleep toolkit should prioritize safety and non-addiction options first!** Buspirone is your GAD champion, trazodone is your sleep superhero, and propranolol is your performance anxiety specialist. Save the benzos for true emergencies and short-term use only.

**Remember: The best anxiolytic is often therapy + lifestyle changes + the right non-addictive medication! ♀✨**

Sweet dreams and calm days ahead! ◆◆◆◆

## References

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