

the RED CUP Q&A

separating alcohol fact from fiction

wildfact

Combining Xanax and grapefruit juice may produce toxic side effects.

How dangerous is the combination of alcohol and Xanax?

Extremely!

Mixing Xanax and alcohol is always a bad idea. The combination can produce effects that range from being mildly uncomfortable to ones that are fatal.

Xanax is a benzodiazepine (tranquilizer) and is most often used for short-term treatment of anxiety, panic attacks, insomnia, and seizures.

Both drugs markedly magnify the effect of the other. You can become intoxicated much quicker when taking Xanax while consuming alcohol. Xanax may intensify alcohol's ability to cloud judgment and you may easily find yourself making poor decisions that could quickly lead to regret.

Combining Xanax and alcohol (two central nervous system depressants) creates a synergistic action called "potentiation" in which

the effect of the two drugs taken simultaneously is much greater than the sum of the effects of each drug taken separately. The risks of coma or death from respiratory and cardiac failure are significantly greater.

Ironically, when combined with alcohol, Xanax, which is intended to reduce panic attacks, may actually trigger more intensive panic attacks. This mixture can increase the likelihood of intense and unstable mood swings and behaviors.

Xanax is also considered one of the most addictive tranquilizers. A serious danger of Xanax addiction is abruptly stopping it because of the risk of seizures. Withdrawal from Xanax needs to be done gradually and under the care of a physician. The bottom line is that the combination of alcohol with any other drug is risky and is especially so with Xanax.

Got a question about alcohol? Email it to redcup@email.arizona.edu



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