**Drug alert**

**Round, white, unmarked tablets** – likely sold as ‘Mylan’ or ‘Xanax’ – are circulating in Victoria. They contain **five novel benzodiazepines**.

**Novel benzodiazepines (benzos) produce some similar effects to prescription benzos but are often more potent and unpredictable.**

**Five different novel benzos** have been detected in these tablets: **bromazolam**, **clonazolam**, **etizolam**, **flualprazolam** and **flubromazepam**. These tablets are **not a pharmaceutical product** and do not contain alprazolam (the active ingredient in Xanax® and Kalma® branded prescription benzodiazepines).

**Benzodiazepines** are central nervous system depressants, which means they slow down messages between the brain and body. Their **effects** can include anxiety suppression, sedation, amnesia, and disinhibition (doing risky things without being fully aware you’re doing them). **Higher doses** can lead to drowsiness, reduced consciousness, difficulty breathing, and death. Dependence can form rapidly if taken often.

**Prescription benzos are medications**, but new **non-pharmaceutical** benzodiazepines **(‘novel benzos’)** have emerged worldwide in recent years, sometimes made to look like prescription benzos. Novel drugs have not been well-studied but can be more potent and unpredictable than more common drugs.

**These tablets may lead to unexpected and impairing effects in small doses**

People who are used to prescription benzos may expect a particular (mild) effect from a single pill. In contrast, people in Victoria who have consumed **as few as one of these tablets** have required emergency medical intervention (no other drugs were involved).

The presence of **multiple, interacting novel benzos** in these tablets means unwanted effects are more likely. It is unusual to find five different benzos in one tablet. In particular, clonazolam, flualprazolam and flubromazepam have stronger effects in small amounts, and a longer duration, than other benzos.

**Using any benzos with other depressants such as alcohol or opioids increases the risk of overdose.**

**Reducing the risk of harm**

If you experience adverse drug effects, or are present when someone has an unexpected reaction, **seek help immediately by calling Triple Zero (000)**.

All alcohol and other drug use comes with risks, so:

* **Be aware** that other false or contaminated drug products may circulate in Victoria, even if no specific warning has been issued about them. **More info about counterfeit/fake benzos** is [here](https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/aod/public-drug-alerts/Pages/counterfeit-alprazolam-july.aspx) and [here](https://www.tga.gov.au/alert/counterfeit-alprazolam-2mg-and-kalma-2-tablets).
* **Start low and go slow** with how much you consume. If you have any unexpected or delayed reaction to a drug, **do not take more**.
* Make sure you’re in a **safe environment with people you trust**.
* **Remember**, even ‘pure’ drugs can produce serious side effects and death, and can interact dangerously with medications/pharmaceutical drugs – get the facts at: [adf.org.au/drug-facts/](https://adf.org.au/drug-facts/).

Contact **Harm Reduction Victoria’s DanceWize team** for anonymous support and education from peers. Talk to DanceWize volunteers online at [facebook.com/dancewizeaustralia](http://www.facebook.com/dancewizeaustralia) or by email at info@dancewize.org.au.

If you or someone you know needs help with alcohol or drug use, call DirectLine on 1800 888 236 or visit [directline.org.au](https://www.directline.org.au/) for information and support to access treatment.