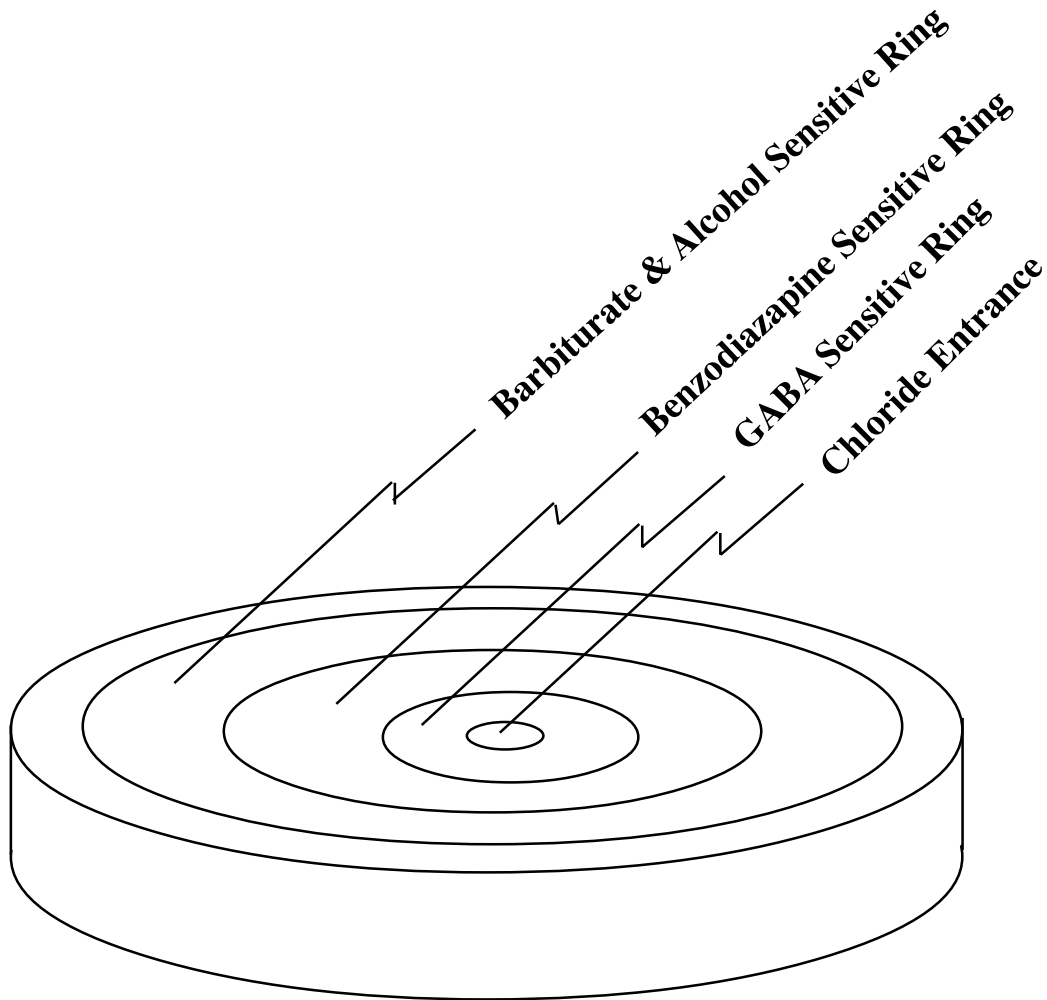


# **“BATTLING THE BENZO’S” AND ENDING DEPENDENCY**



**By: Dr. Terry Neher**

## "BATTLING THE BENZO'S"

Understanding this terrible dependency, protracted withdrawal, and successful freedom from the use of tranquilizers is best understood if approached from several fronts.

First, how a dependency develops. Every thought, every feeling, every action we as humans experience requires the interaction of various neurotransmitter systems within our brains. Neurotransmitters are chemicals which interact with receptors in our brains to produce these thoughts, feelings and actions. In the case of tranquilizer drugs there are four neurotransmitters which are important to understand.

they ASSIST GABA in opening the hole and letting chloride in, slowing things down.

Further out, toward the outer edge of the doughnut, are receptors which attach barbiturates, such as phenobarbital and seconal. The alcohol molecule from beer, wine or liquor also attaches at these same receptors, which is one reason to NEVER drink alcohol and take tranquilizers.

What we are concerned with in this writing are the GABA receptors and the next row of receptors utilized by benzodiazepines. When benzo's are used to assist GABA there is less need for large amounts

Neurotransmitter	Function In	Deficiencies Result In
GABA	Maintaining calm	Anxiety, panic, racing mind, fast heart rate, etc
Enkephalin	Positive self concept, internal calm	Low self esteem, feelings of inadequacy
Dopamine	Feelings of Pleasure	Lack of pleasure in life
Norepinephrine	Energy, excitement, panic	Lack of energy, depression

This is neither a complete list of neurotransmitters nor of their functions. However, it can serve as a foundation for understanding what has happened to you and why it is so difficult to "just stop" the use of tranquilizers.

The most important neurotransmitter in this issue is GABA. It keeps things on an even keel, maintains calm, allows rational thoughts and feelings and keeps you in balance. Picture, now, a large doughnut with a tiny hole in the center of the doughnut. This is how a GABA receptor complex looks through a microscope. Receptors for GABA are arranged near the center of the doughnut in a circle around the tiny hole. When GABA binds (hooks onto) these specific receptors it "tightens" the doughnut and enlarges the hole. This allows chloride to enter the cell through the hole. It is this chloride which slows down firings, slows down thoughts and allows calm feelings.

In a ring around the hole but out in the center of the doughnut are receptors which attract and attach tranquilizers. When these drugs attach to the receptors

of GABA to be present and, consequently, the brain reduces the available GABA. The brain is not wasteful, it will not make what it does not appear to need. Brain chemistry has NO value system. Brain chemistry does not know right from wrong or good from bad. It only knows chemistry. However, our thought processes *are* based upon available brain chemistry. And thus, in the final analysis, poor brain chemistry results in poor value systems.

Over a period of a few weeks using benzo's your GABA is reduced to the point that you MUST use a drug to activate secondary sites, and assist the GABA in opening the chloride channels. As more and more GABA is depleted you must use more benzo's and so on. This is dependency. You have become dependent on a drug to produce a function of life. If you try to stop the use of the benzo you have no way to open the chloride channels and slow down the firing of adrenaline throughout your body. Everything races, everything is a threat, You are now in a constant state of flight or fight. No GABA, no calm and no sleep

because your brain won't turn off. Under these circumstances thought becomes negative and threatening with constant anxiety leading to panic.

Scientists working at NeuroGenesis in the 1980's discovered that stress dramatically reduces GABA. Stress also reduces Enkephalin (see chart) and Dopamine. In fact, in just 30 minutes time laboratory animals placed under stress experienced a 50% loss of GABA and Enkephalin. If these lab animals had sought a physician at the time they would have been given a benzodiazepine to "relieve the stress". As we have described, however, this drug would worsen the problem of GABA availability. Now GABA is not only threatened by stress (trauma) but by a drug which uses secondary receptors and further reduces available GABA. The animals would have become addicted to (dependent upon) benzo's. When the benzo would have been stopped the animals would have become "berserk" with activity and flight or fight would have become their life until they died of a heart attack or stroke.

Tapering off of the drug is very necessary. That is, it is important to slowly reduce the use of benzo so as not to overstimulate the sympathetic nervous system (adrenal system) and cause potential life threatening events. **It is thus obvious that tapering off should be monitored by your prescribing physician.**

However, tapering does not do enough for the repair of the damaged GABA system. This is why the scientists at NeuroGenesis became determined to develop a supplement which would help build GABA and the supporting chemistries of Enkephalin and Dopamine. beCALM'd™ does this. At this time we recommend that in the beginning you augment beCALM'd with additional l-glutamine to assist in the immediate production of GABA. This additional l-glutamine should be necessary for only 2-3 weeks. One 500 mg l-glutamine capsule with each two beCALM'd capsules should be sufficient.

The GABA system also requires the presence of sufficient chloride in the blood stream in order to efficiently reduce anxiety. Salt (sodium chloride) is the obvious source of chloride molecules. If you are concerned about salt and blood pressure, we suggest that you use potassium chloride. Most grocery stores carry this as a salt substitute.

The answer to this problem is not simply chemical however. You cannot take a pill and have stress go away. It changes your perception, changes the way that you feel but does not address the underlying cause

which is/are the problem/s of life which lead to the initial reduction of your natural chemistry. It is true, however, that in order to win the war against benzo's you must make peace with your biochemistry. beCALM'd will assist with this.

Now the second front of the attack on this dependency. Each person suffering from this problem must learn and utilize daily a problem solving technique to deal with the "stressors" in their lives. There are three main stressors in life today and they are (1) money problems, (2) job problems and (3) relationship problems. The trauma of any or all of these issues will continue to deplete GABA and the supporting calming chemistry enkephalin. A good way to deal with many problems is to solve each problem separately. A useful problem solving technique follows:

1. What is the problem?
2. Exactly what is causing the problem?
3. What are three alternative solutions for the problem and the possible consequences of each?
4. Choose one alternative and try it for a period of time (about a month)
5. If it works, keep on doing it. If it doesn't work choose one of the other alternatives

An Example:

1. What is the problem? The problem is that there are too many bills for the money that is available.
2. Exactly what is causing the problem Too many credit card bills, not enough salary for all the bills.
3. Three alternatives:
  - a Put away the credit cards. Contact creditors and make arrangements for payment. Consequence: Not going further in debt; developing a plan to pay the bills. Reduced stress.
  - b. Get a second job. Consequence: more money to pay on bills.
  - c. Do nothing different. Consequence: More stress, more panic, more debt, more problems.
4. Choose one: your decision!

You will be unable to get off tranquilizers and be

comfortable if all you attempt is to taper and take pills. You must take charge of your life one issue at a time. If you do not, it will only get worse. Structure and discipline are your allies.

Facts are friendly. Do not avoid information. Get it, *deal with it*, conquer the problem, and anxiety goes away.

Third Front: When and what you eat!

It is common for persons using benzo's to have little or no appetite. When in some stage or phase of withdrawal and adrenaline is pumping and anxiety is high you have no appetite. (Survival says do not stop to eat when threatened - run or fight).

You must begin to eat small meals several times a day. You must provide food for repair of damaged systems. This is no time to "diet". Eat small portions of quality food several times during the day. Avoid caffeine, chocolate, cola drinks (diet or regular) and refined sugar. These substances will add to adrenaline or quickly boost blood sugar which will produce anxiety. Eat cheese and fruit before bed, cottage cheese is best. Use common sense, take care of yourself and you will recover just fine. Many of us have done so with complete success.

Continue the use of beCALM'd daily, up to six

per day. If you use more than six you just waste it. Most of us continue to use beCALM'd daily for years because it helps keep us in balance. It is interesting to note that a drug becomes useless over a period of time for one of three reasons: 1) it becomes toxic, 2) the body becomes used to it so it no longer works, or 3) an allergy to it develops. None of these occur with amino acid adjuncts to therapy, such as beCALM'd, as they are in fact just concentrated, highly nutritional food.

### **Conclusion:**

You must win this War on all three fronts: repairing GABA, dealing with the problems, and eating well. There is no other way to be really successful: Taper and take your supplement. (beCALM'd has the building blocks for GABA, Enkephalin, Dopamine.) Problem solve your issues. Eat in a healthy manner.

You can do it, just do it. Ask yourself if you would like a normal life, with normal issues and normal solutions. If so, then JUST DO IT.

You will also find that helping your friends with problem solving solutions will help you with yours. Remember, *practice makes perfect*.

## **Notes:**