



Xanax Addiction

When a Prescription Meant to Calm Becomes a Substance of Abuse

What is Xanax Addiction?

Xanax (alprazolam) addiction is a chronic brain disorder rooted in a medication originally prescribed for anxiety or panic. Because Xanax acts faster and wears off sooner than other benzodiazepines, it creates a rapid cycle of relief and rebound that makes it uniquely difficult to stop. Physical dependence can develop within weeks, and the brain quickly begins to require the drug just to reach a baseline state of calm.

What Does It Look Like?

- **Running Out of Prescriptions Early**
They fill a 30-day supply and need more within two weeks, rotating doctors or pharmacies to keep up.
- **Visible Panic When Access Is Threatened**
Missing a dose or running low produces immediate agitation, restlessness, or physical symptoms.
- **Self-Medication With Diminishing Returns**
The prescribed amount isn't as effective as it once was, and they increase dosage on their own.
- **Personality Shifts With Each Dose**
They seem sedated and detached after taking Xanax. Once it wears off, they become anxious or irritable.

Why Does Xanax Addiction Become Chronic?

When someone has cycled through treatment programs and keeps returning to Xanax, the pattern reflects the drug's affect on brain chemistry.

- 1) Self-Reinforcing Loop**
Xanax delivers relief within minutes but wears off in hours, training the brain to seek the next dose before it's needed.
- 2) Deeply Ingrained Neurological Dependence**
Withdrawal can persist for months after the last dose. Short-term programs aren't long enough to stabilize the brain.
- 3) Co-Occurring Anxiety Disorders**
Panic disorder, generalized anxiety, PTSD, and depression commonly drive Xanax dependence and need to be addressed on their own.

Prevalence:

75% of benzodiazepine misuse in U.S. adults is attributed to Xanax¹

Co-Occurrence:

40% of individuals who misuse have a co-occurring disorder²

Relapse Risk:

40-60% of individuals with complicated benzodiazepine dependence relapse within 1 year³

Sources: ¹ Maust et al., *Psychiatric Services* (2019); *NSDUH 2015-2016 analysis*. ² Longo & Johnson, *Mental Health Clinician* (2016). ³ Brett & Murnion, *Australian Prescriber* (2015).

Long-Term Treatment for Xanax Addiction

Xanax rewires the brain's GABA system within weeks of regular use, and withdrawal symptoms can persist for months after discontinuation. A short-term program may manage the acute withdrawal phase, but it can't adequately address the **co-occurring conditions that started the prescription**, the anxiety rebound, or the deeply ingrained belief that the person can't function without the drug.

Our long-term, progress-based model **gives the nervous system time to stabilize** while addressing the anxiety, trauma, and thought patterns that sustained the dependence. Clients advance when they demonstrate real behavioral transformation.



"Families feel guilty or confused because a doctor prescribed it. They need to understand that the prescription origin does not make the dependence less real, and it does not make their concern less valid."

 **Angie Buja, LPC-S**
Family Program Director, Burning Tree Ranch



Dual Diagnosis Treatment for Xanax Addiction

When Xanax dependence is treated without addressing the conditions that drove the prescription, relapse is highly likely. **Panic disorder, generalized anxiety, PTSD, and depression** co-occur with benzodiazepine misuse at significantly elevated rates, and each condition amplifies the other. Removing the drug without treating the underlying disorder leaves the person stuck in a cycle of anxiety and self-medication as a coping mechanism.

At Burning Tree Ranch, we create an individualized treatment plan that **addresses Xanax dependence alongside co-occurring anxiety disorders**, trauma, and depression through evidence-based therapies and trauma-informed care, building a lasting sobriety.

Dual Diagnosis Defined:

The presence of **both a substance use disorder and a mental health condition** occurring together. Effective treatment for dual-diagnosis addictions must address both aspects simultaneously.



Have Other Treatment Programs Missed the Deeper Issues?

Burning Tree Ranch is the Nation's only authentic long-term treatment program for chronic relapse. Call us at (866) 287-2877 or visit us online at www.BurningTree.com.

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