

# Barbiturate

see [Barbiturate coma](#).

Barbiturates are drugs that act as central nervous system depressants, and can therefore produce a wide spectrum of effects, from mild sedation to total anesthesia. They are also effective as anxiolytics, hypnotics, and anticonvulsants. Barbiturates also have analgesic effects; however, these effects are somewhat weak, preventing barbiturates from being used in surgery in the presence of other analgesics (opioids or volatile anesthetics such as [halothane](#)). They have addiction potential, both physical and psychological. Barbiturates have largely been replaced by benzodiazepines in routine medical practice – for example, in the treatment of anxiety and insomnia – mainly because benzodiazepines are significantly less dangerous in overdose and there is no specific antidote for barbiturate overdose. However, barbiturates are still used in general anesthesia, for epilepsy, for the treatment of acute migraines and cluster headaches (in the compound drugs Fioricet and Fiorinal) (under stringent protocols with mandatory physician monitoring for addiction and abuse), and (where legal) assisted suicide and euthanasia.

Barbiturates are derivatives of barbituric acid.

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