

BARBITURATES

A group of central nervous system depressant drugs intended for therapeutic use. Barbiturates can be addictive and have severe side effects and withdrawal symptoms. They disturb natural sleep patterns and may produce ‘hangovers’. Effects may range from relaxation and anxiety relief to withdrawal, depression or aggression. Barbiturates tend to accumulate in the body, and in large doses can be lethal. If combined with alcohol they can trigger toxic or overdose reactions even in small amounts.

Signs of Intoxication: Drowsiness, decrease alertness, slurred speech, muscle incoordination and deep sleep.

Withdrawal Symptoms: Restlessness, insomnia, disturbed dreaming, irritability. Abrupt Withdrawal from high doses may produce tremors, extreme anxiety, delirium, hallucination, life-threatening convulsions.

EFFECTS OF CHRONIC USE

- *Mind & Behavior:* Confusion, impaired judgement and memory, emotional instability, depression.
- *Central Nervous System:* Depressed activity.
- *Heart & Blood:* Reduced activity.
- *Brain:* Danger of permanent brain damage with high doses.
- *Lungs:* Respiratory depression.
- *Fetus:* May cause developmental abnormalities and withdrawal symptoms in newborns.