

Acute Sedation: Using medicine to calm

Adult Mental Health Information sheet

Using medicine to keep calm?

Medicines can slow you down and make you sleepy. People who are very upset or angry sometimes need medicine to help keep them or others safe.

When do we use it?

Your team will try their best to help you and other people stay safe. People who are upset, angry or afraid sometimes do things that hurt themselves or others. Our team will try to help in lots of ways; things like giving you extra time, space, quiet, favourite things or people. But sometimes this isn't enough to keep people safe. When it's possible your team will talk about using medicine with you, your family or carers.

Acute sedation is often given as an injection (needle). People getting needles may need to stay very still. Staff might need to hold you for a short time so it's safe to give the medicine. Please read the 'Physical Restraint' information sheet.

Planning can make a difference

We want to help you feel supported and cared for in the health service. We will talk with you about ways to help you feel safe and in control, and what makes you upset. We want to know what works for you. Staff will try as many ways as they can to keep people safe and/or stop situations becoming dangerous.

Talk with your team about the use of medicine and when it might be helpful.

Medicine cannot be used to punish someone, or because the team is tired or its time to change over staff.

Who can give acute sedation?

Like other medicine, a doctor needs to decide that the medicine is safe to give. The medicine can only be given by a doctor or nurse.

Is there a risk?

All medicines need to be used properly to be safe. All medicines have benefits and risks. Not using the medicine may also have risks.

The medicines for making you calm and sleepy are called sedatives. Doctors need to carefully choose the right one for you. It will depend on your age, body shape, size and health.

Remember to ask your doctor about:

- What medicine could be helpful for you.
- If there can be problems using the medicine
- What to look out for (side effects)
- Anything that might need urgent attention.

Staying safe with medicines

All Queensland Health staff need to follow clear guidelines for using medicines, especially sedatives. The guidelines tell us about important clinical checks and observations of the person. We need to write these checks in your clinical record.

How do we help you be safe with acute sedation?

We want to help you feel as safe as possible. A member of the team will talk with you as soon as possible about what happened. We want to check out any worries, and help you to cope with your feelings.

The team will keep checking on your health.

The *Independent Patient Rights Adviser* can talk with you or your family/ carer about any concerns.

Useful Links:

Mental Health Act 2016

<https://www.health.qld.gov.au/clinical-practice/guidelines-procedures/clinical-staff/mental-health/act>

Acute behavioural disturbance management (including acute sedation in Queensland Health Authorised Mental Health Services) (adults)

https://www.health.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0026/665306/qh-gdl-451.pdf

