

# Medication/Drug Use

## **Section Summary**

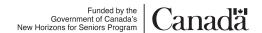
- Anticholinergics and benzodiazepines have both been linked to an increased dementia risk.
- Doctors may not be thinking about dementia risk when they prescribe these medications.
- Anticholinergics are drugs such as tricyclic antidepressants and some drugs that are
  used to treat conditions like Allergies, Asthma, Diarrhea, Parkinson's disease symptoms,
  etc.
  - Older adults who take anticholinergics, especially long term, have been found to have a higher risk of developing dementia and Alzheimer's disease.
- Benzodiazepines are drugs mainly used to treat different types of anxiety disorders and in some cases insomnia and epilepsy.
  - Middle aged and older adults who use benzodiazepines have been found to be at a greater risk for developing dementia.

#### **Activities**

### Activity One: To Take or Not To Take (Medication)

This activity serves only as a thinking exercise and participants should always consult with their healthcare provider when making decisions about medication use.

- Have each participant create a personal pros and cons list of medication use.
  - Allow participants to think about the risks vs. benefit and what is important to them.
- Have participants (depending on their comfort level) share some of the pros and cons they have come up with.
- Use screensharing or a whiteboard to create a master pros and cons list for the group.





#### **Discussion Questions**

- Were you previously aware of the associations between anticholinergics and benzodiazepines and dementia?
- After learning about the dementia related risk factors of anticholinergics and benzodiazepine how likely would you be to use them?
  - Additionally, what kind of conversation would you hope to have with your healthcare provider before taking them?

