

# Substance Use Trend

# Alert

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## Bromazolam in the U.S. and Florida

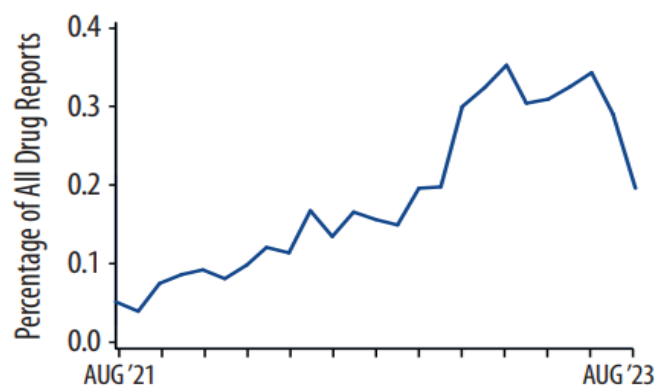
The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) seized over 79 million counterfeit pills in 2023.<sup>1</sup> Counterfeit pills are made to look identical to real prescription medications.<sup>2</sup> “Fake Xanax” can be bought online through social media and contains bromazolam, a synthetically manufactured benzodiazepine. Bromazolam first emerged in the U.S. in 2019. A rapid increase in toxicology cases has been detected with bromazolam appearing in 1% of toxicology reports in 2021 compared to 13% in mid-2022.<sup>3</sup> Brozaolam is extremely potent at low doses and not approved in the U.S., making these “Fake Xanax” pills dangerous as they also often contain fentanyl.<sup>2</sup> With properties similar to Xanax, there are adverse effects of bromazolam, including sedation, drowsiness, blurred vision, coma, and in some cases death.<sup>3</sup> This comes with increasing concern as combinations of benzodiazepines with opioids, called “benzo dope”, are also on the rise among drug users. Naloxone only works to reverse a suspected opioid overdose, and because bromazolam is a synthetic benzodiazepine, naloxone may not be effective against this drug.

### Bromazolam in the U.S.

Within the first six months of 2023, bromazolam contained 73% of the supply of new synthetic benzodiazepines.<sup>3</sup> Local, state, and federal forensic laboratories analyze substances seized from law enforcement. Bromazolam was one of the most frequently identified drugs submitted to laboratories with 2,021 drug cases in 2022.<sup>4</sup> Figure 1 depicts upward trends of bromazolam as a percentage of all drug reports from August 2021 to August 2023.<sup>5</sup>

### Bromazolam in Florida

The rise in bromazolam across the nation has lead leaders in Florida to warn Floridians about using illicit substances like bromazolam. From February 2021 to May 2022 there were three positive forensic toxicology cases of bromazolam in Florida.<sup>3</sup>



**Figure 1:** Upward Trends of Bromazolam, Aug. 2021 – Aug. 2023. Source: [NFLIS](#)

### Recommendations

Any medication not prescribed directly by a medical professional is unsafe. The DEA established the One Pill can Kill campaign which warns about the dangers of taking unknown pills that can cause death.<sup>6</sup> The DEA also reports that 7 out of every 10 pills include a lethal dose of fentanyl.<sup>6</sup> It is important to raise awareness about the risks and dangers of new benzodiazepine use for public health and substance use prevention and treatment.<sup>3</sup> Bromazolam is not widely incorporated into forensic testing and should be considered as a standard for toxicology investigations.<sup>3</sup>

**Additional Information Sources:**

[GetNaloxoneNow](#)

[ISAVEFL](#)

[DOSE of REALITY](#)

[One Pill Can Kill](#)

**References**

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