

[Open Peer Review on Qeios](#)

# Valerian

National Cancer Institute

## Source

National Cancer Institute. *Valerian*. NCI Thesaurus. Code C38725.

An herbal extract isolated from the root of the plant *Valeriana officinalis* with sedative and anxiolytic activities. *Valeriana officinalis* extract contains four distinct classes of phytochemical constituents: volatile oils; sesquiterpenoids, including valerenic acid and its hydroxyl and acetoxyl derivative; valepotriates; and volatile pyridine alkaloids. Although the exact mechanism of action has not been established, the sesquiterpenoids in *Valeriana officinalis* extract, particularly valerenic acid, appear to account for its sedative and anxiolytic effects. Valerenic acid is both a subtype-selective GABA-A receptor agonist and a 5HT-5A receptor partial agonist. The sedative-hypnotic benzodiazepines are GABA-A receptor agonists.