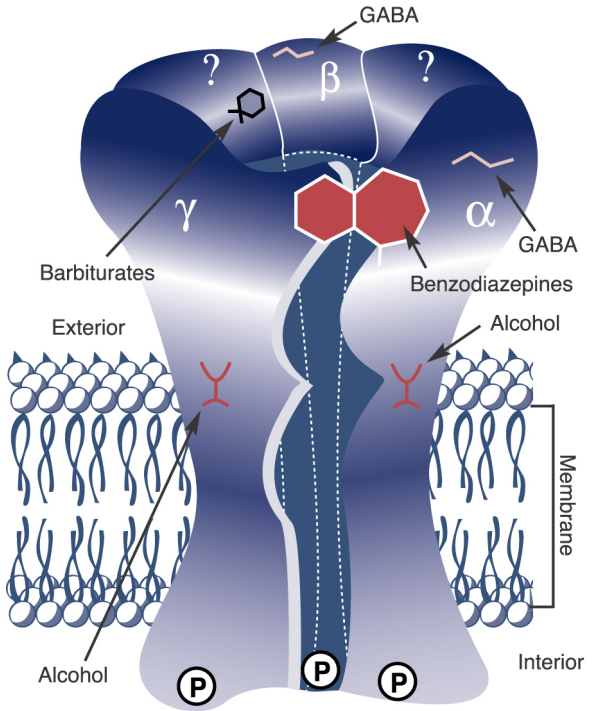
Schematic representation of the gamma-aminobutyric acid ($GABA_A$) receptor



Schematic representation of the gamma-aminobutyric acid ($GABA_A$) receptor. The functional receptor consists of five proteins, or subunits--most likely two α subunits, one β subunit, and two γ subunits. (Question marks indicate that the identity of these subunits has not been confirmed.) The proposed binding sites for GABA (α and β subunits), benzodiazepines (adjacent αand γ subunits), barbituates (unidentified subunit), and alcohol α, β, and γ subunits) are indicated. P's represent phosphate groups attached to the receptor that regulate the receptor's activity and sensitivity to alcohol.

Source: Mihic, S.J., and Harris, R.A. GABA and the $GABA_A$ receptor. *Alcohol Health & Research World* 21(2):127–131, 1997.

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