

Patient Education

LORAZEPAM - ORAL

IMPORTANT: HOW TO USE THIS INFORMATION: This is a summary and does NOT have all possible information about this product. This information does not assure that this product is safe, effective, or appropriate for you. This information is not individual medical advice and does not substitute for the advice of your health care professional. Always ask your health care professional for complete information about this product and your specific health needs.

LORAZEPAM – ORAL COMMON BRAND NAME(S): Ativan

USES:

This medication is used to treat anxiety. Lorazepam belongs to a class of drugs known as benzodiazepines which act on the brain and nerves (central nervous system) to produce a calming effect. This drug works by enhancing the effects of a certain natural chemical in the body (GABA).

OTHER USES:

This section contains uses of this drug that are not listed in the approved professional labeling for the drug but that may be prescribed by your health care professional. Use this drug for a condition that is listed in this section only if it has been so prescribed by your health care professional.

If directed by your doctor, this drug may also be used to reduce the symptoms of alcohol withdrawal, to prevent nausea and vomiting due to chemotherapy, and for sleeping trouble (insomnia).

HOW TO USE:

Take this medication by mouth with or without food as directed by your doctor. Dosage is based on your medical condition and response to therapy.

If directed by your doctor, use this medication regularly in order to get the most benefit from it. To help you remember, use it at the same time(s) each day.

This medication may cause withdrawal reactions, especially if it has been used regularly for a long time or in high doses (more than 1-4 weeks) or if you have a history of alcoholism, drug abuse, or personality disorder. In such cases, withdrawal symptoms (such as seizures, trouble sleeping, mental/mood changes, increased reactions to noise/touch/light, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, loss of appetite, stomach pain, hallucinations, numbness/tingling of arms and legs, muscle pain, fast heartbeat, short-term memory loss, and very high fever) may occur if you suddenly stop using this medication. To prevent withdrawal reactions, your doctor may reduce your dose gradually. Consult your doctor or pharmacist for more details, and report any withdrawal reactions immediately.

Though it is very unlikely to occur, this medication can also result in abnormal drug-seeking behavior (addiction/habit forming). Do not increase your dose, take it more frequently, or use it for a longer time than prescribed. Properly stop the medication when so directed. This will lessen the chances of becoming addicted.

Do not suddenly stop using this drug without your doctor's approval. Some conditions may become worse when the drug is abruptly stopped. Your dose may need to be gradually decreased.

This drug may make you dizzy or drowsy or cause blurred vision. Do not drive, use machinery, or do any activity that requires alertness or clear vision until you are sure you can perform such activities safely. Avoid alcoholic beverages.

Before having surgery, tell your doctor or dentist that you are using this medication.

The elderly may be more sensitive to the effects of this drug, especially drowsiness and unsteadiness. Also, the elderly may not experience relief of anxiety with lorazepam. It may have the opposite effect on the elderly, causing mental/mood changes, sleeping problems, increase in sexual interest, or hallucinations.

Children may not experience relief of anxiety with lorazepam. It may have the opposite effect on children, causing agitation, shaking, or hallucinations.

This medication is not recommended for use during pregnancy. It may harm an unborn baby. Infants born to mothers who took this drug during the last weeks before delivery have had withdrawal symptoms, including unusual drowsiness, slowed breathing, and feeding problems. Consult your doctor for more details

This drug passes into breast milk and may have undesirable effects on a nursing infant. Consult your doctor before breast-feeding.

DRUG INTERACTIONS:

Your healthcare professionals (e.g., doctor or pharmacist) may already be aware of any possible drug interactions and may be monitoring you for it. Do not start, stop or change the dosage of any medicine before checking with them first.

This drug should not be used with the following medication because a very serious interactions may occur: sodium oxybate (also known as gamma hydroxybutyrate or GHB).

If you are currently using this medication listed above, tell your doctor or pharmacist before starting lorazepam.

Before using this medication, tell your doctor or pharmacist of all prescription and nonprescription/herbal products you may use, especially of: aminophylline, clozapine, kava, probenecid, theophylline, valproate.

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you also take drugs that cause drowsiness such as: certain antihistamines (e.g., diphenhydramine), anti-seizure drugs (e.g., carbamazepine), medicine for sleep or anxiety (e.g., alprazolam, diazepam, zolpidem), muscle relaxants, narcotic pain relievers (e.g., codeine), psychiatric medicines (e.g., chlorpromazine, risperidone, amitriptyline, trazodone).

Check the labels on all your medicines (e.g., cough-and-cold products) because they may contain drowsiness-causing ingredients. Ask your pharmacist about the safe use of those products.

This document does not contain all possible interactions. Therefore, before using this product, tell your doctor or pharmacist of all the products you use. Keep a list of all your medications with you, and share the list with your doctor and pharmacist.

When used for an extended time, this medication may not work as well and may require different dosing. Talk with your doctor if this medication stops working well. Do not increase your dose without first talking to your doctor.

Inform your doctor if your condition persists or worsens.

SIDE EFFECTS:

Drowsiness, dizziness, loss of coordination, headache, nausea, blurred vision, change in sexual interest/ability, hair loss, constipation, heartburn, or change in appetite may occur. If any of these effects persist or worsen, notify your doctor or pharmacist promptly.

Remember that your doctor has prescribed this medication because he or she has judged that the benefit to you is greater than the risk of side effects. Many people using this medication do not have serious side effects.

Tell your doctor immediately if any of these unlikely but serious side effects occur: memory loss, shaking, difficult/slurred speech, vision changes, mental/mood changes (e.g., depression, including rare thoughts of suicide), trouble breathing (especially during sleep), stomach/abdominal pain, yellowing of skin/eyes, dark urine, seizures, easy bruising/bleeding, signs of infection (e.g., fever, persistent sore throat), unusual weakness, low body temperature.

A very serious allergic reaction to this drug is unlikely, but seek immediate medical attention if it occurs. Symptoms of a serious allergic reaction may include: rash, itching/swelling (especially of the face/tongue/throat), severe dizziness, trouble breathing.

This is not a complete list of possible side effects. If you notice other effects not listed above, contact your doctor or pharmacist.

In the US -

Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

In Canada - Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to Health Canada at 1-866-234-2345.

PRECAUTIONS:

Before taking lorazepam, tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are allergic to it; or to other benzodiazepines (e.g., diazepam, alprazolam, clonazepam); or if you have any other allergies. This product may contain inactive ingredients, which can cause allergic reactions or other problems. Talk to your pharmacist for more details.

This medication should not be used if you have certain medical conditions. Before using this medicine, consult your doctor or pharmacist if you have: narrow-angle glaucoma.

Before using this medication, tell your doctor or pharmacist your medical history, especially of: heart disease, kidney disease, liver disease, severe lung/breathing problems (chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder-COPD, sleep apnea), mental/mood disorders (e.g., depression, psychosis), another type of glaucoma (open-angle type), muscle weakness, drug/alcohol abuse.

OVERDOSE:

If overdose is suspected, contact your local poison control center or emergency room immediately. US residents can call the US national poison hotline at 1-800-222-1222. Canadian residents should call their local poison control center directly. Symptoms of overdose may include confusion, slow reflexes, clumsiness, deep sleep, and loss of consciousness.

NOTES:

Lifestyle changes such as starting a stress reduction program may increase the effectiveness of this medicine. Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about lifestyle changes that might benefit you.

Do not share this medication with others. It is against the law.

Laboratory and/or medical tests (e.g., blood counts, liver function tests) should be performed periodically to monitor your progress or check for side effects. Consult your doctor for more details.

MISSED DOSE:

If you miss a dose and are taking more than 1 dose daily, do not take it if it is almost time for the next dose. Instead, skip the missed dose and resume your usual dosing schedule. Do not double the dose to catch up. If you take it once daily at bedtime and miss a dose, do not take it the following morning. Call your doctor to find out what to do.

STORAGE:

Store at room temperature between 68-77 degrees F (20-25 degrees C) away from light and moisture. Do not store in the bathroom. Keep all medicines away from children and pets.

Do not flush medications down the toilet or pour them into a drain unless instructed to do so. Properly discard this product when it is expired or no longer needed. Consult your pharmacist or local waste disposal company for more details about how to safely discard your product.

MEDICAL ALERT: Your condition can cause complications in a medical emergency. For enrollment information call MedicAlert at 1-800-854-1166 (USA) or 1-800-668-1507 (Canada).