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# Xanax

**Generic name:** [alprazolam](#) [ *al-PRAY-zoe-lam* ]

**Brand names:** Xanax, [Xanax XR](#)

**Drug class:** [Benzodiazepines](#)

Medically reviewed by [Kaci Durbin, MD](#). Last updated on Nov 21, 2024.

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## What is Xanax?

Xanax is a benzodiazepine (ben-zoe-dye-AZE-eh-peen). It is thought that alprazolam works by enhancing the activity of certain neurotransmitters in the brain.

Xanax is used to treat [anxiety disorders](#) and anxiety caused by [depression](#).

Xanax is also used to treat [panic disorders](#) with or without a fear of places and situations that might cause panic, helplessness, or embarrassment (agoraphobia).

It is dangerous to purchase Xanax on the Internet or outside the United States. The sale and distribution of medicines outside the U.S. does not comply with safe-use regulations of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). These medications may contain dangerous ingredients, or may not be distributed by a licensed pharmacy.

## Warnings

**Xanax can slow or stop your breathing, especially if you have recently used an opioid medication or alcohol.**

MISUSE OF XANAX CAN CAUSE ADDICTION, OVERDOSE, OR DEATH. Keep the medication in a place where others cannot get to it.

Do not stop using Xanax without asking your doctor. You may have life-threatening withdrawal symptoms if you stop using the medicine suddenly after long-term use. Some withdrawal symptoms may last up to 12 months or longer.

**Get medical help right away if you stop using Xanax and have symptoms such as:** unusual muscle movements, being more active or talkative, sudden and severe changes in mood or behavior, confusion, hallucinations, seizures, or thoughts about suicide.

Xanax is a federal controlled substance (C-IV) because it can be abused or lead to dependence. Keep this medicine in a safe place to prevent misuse and abuse. Selling or giving away this Xanax may harm others, and is against the law. Tell your healthcare provider if you have abused or been dependent on alcohol, prescription medicines or street drugs.

## Before taking this medicine

You should not take Xanax if:

- you also take antifungal medicine such as [itraconazole](#) or [ketoconazole](#); or
- you have a history of allergic reaction to any benzodiazepine (alprazolam, [lorazepam](#), [diazepam](#), [Ativan](#), [Valium](#), [Versed](#), [Klonopin](#), and others).

To make sure Xanax is safe for you, tell your doctor if you have ever had:

- breathing problems;
- drug or alcohol addiction;
- [depression](#), mood problems, or suicidal thoughts or behavior; or
- kidney or liver disease.

Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. **If you use Xanax during pregnancy, your baby could be born with life-threatening withdrawal symptoms, and may need medical treatment for several weeks.**

You should not breastfeed.

If you do breastfeed, tell your doctor if you notice drowsiness or feeding problems in the baby.

Not approved for use by anyone younger than 18 years old.

 [Xanax pregnancy and breastfeeding warnings](#) (more detail)

## How should I take Xanax?

Take Xanax exactly as prescribed by your doctor. Follow the directions on your prescription label and read all medication guides or instruction sheets. Never use Xanax in larger amounts, or for longer than prescribed. Tell your doctor if you feel an increased urge to use more of this medicine.

**Never share this medicine with another person, especially someone with a history of drug abuse or addiction. MISUSE CAN CAUSE ADDICTION, OVERDOSE, OR DEATH.** Keep the medication in a place where others cannot get to it. Selling or giving away this medicine is against the law.

Swallow the Xanax XR **extended-release tablet** whole. Do not crush, chew, or break the tablet.

Call your doctor if your symptoms do not improve, or if they get worse.

If you use this medicine long-term, you may need frequent medical tests.

Do not stop using Xanax without asking your doctor. You may have life-threatening withdrawal symptoms if you stop using the medicine suddenly after long-term use.

Store Xanax at room temperature away from moisture, heat, and light. Keep your medicine in a place where no one can use it improperly.

 [Xanax patient tips](#) (more detail)

# Dosing information

## Usual Adult Dose for Anxiety:

Immediate-release tablets: 0.25 to 0.5 mg orally administered 3 times a day

-Maximum dose: 4 mg/day

## Usual Adult Dose for Panic Disorder:

Immediate-release tablets: 0.5 mg orally administered 3 times a day

-Maximum dose: 10 mg/day

Extended-release tablets:

-Initial dose: 0.5 to 1 mg orally once a day

-Maintenance dose: 3 to 6 mg orally per day, preferably in the morning

-Maximum dose: 10 mg/day

Comments:

-The lowest possible effective dose should be administered and the need for continued treatment reassessed frequently.

-Dosage should be reduced gradually when discontinuing therapy or when decreasing the daily dosage.

-The daily dosage may be decreased by no more than 0.5 mg every 3 days; however, some patients may require an even slower dosage reduction.

-The dose of extended-release tablets may be increased at intervals of 3 to 4 days in increments of no more than 1 mg per day.

-The times of administration should be distributed as evenly as possible throughout the waking hours.

## Usual Geriatric Dose for Anxiety:

Elderly or debilitated patients:

Immediate-release tablets: 0.25 mg orally administered 2 or 3 times a day.

## Usual Geriatric Dose for Panic Disorder:

Elderly or debilitated patients:

Immediate-release tablets:

-Initial dose: 0.25 mg orally administered 2 or 3 times a day

Extended-release tablets:

-Initial dose: 0.5 mg orally once a day

Comments:

-If side effects develop, the dose may be lowered.

-The lowest possible effective dose should be administered and the need for continued treatment reassessed frequently.

-Dosage should be reduced gradually when discontinuing therapy or when decreasing the daily dosage.

 [Detailed Xanax dosage information](#)

## What happens if I miss a dose?

Take the medicine as soon as you can, but skip the missed dose if it is almost time for your next dose. Do not take two

doses at one time.

## What happens if I overdose?

Seek emergency medical attention or call the Poison Help line at 1-800-222-1222. **An overdose of alprazolam can be fatal if you take it with alcohol, opioid medicine, or other drugs that cause drowsiness or slow your breathing.**

Overdose symptoms may include severe drowsiness, confusion, slurred speech, muscle weakness, [loss of balance](#) or coordination, feeling light-headed, slow heartbeats, weak or shallow breathing, fainting, or coma.

## What should I avoid while taking Xanax?

**Avoid drinking alcohol.** Dangerous side effects or death could occur.

Avoid driving or hazardous activity until you know how this medicine will affect you. [Dizziness](#) or drowsiness can cause falls, accidents, or severe injuries.

## Xanax side effects

Get emergency medical help if you have **signs of an allergic reaction to Xanax**: [hives](#); difficult breathing; swelling of your face, lips, tongue, or throat.

Alprazolam can slow or stop your breathing, especially if you have recently used an opioid medication or alcohol. A person caring for you should seek emergency medical attention if you have slow breathing with long pauses, blue colored lips, or if you are hard to wake up.

**Common side effects of Xanax may include:**

- drowsiness; or
- feeling light-headed.

**Xanax may cause serious side effects. Call your doctor at once if you have:**

- weak or shallow breathing;
- a light-headed feeling, like you might pass out;
- a seizure;
- hallucinations, risk-taking behavior;
- increased energy, decreased need for sleep;
- racing thoughts, being agitated or talkative;
- double vision; or
- [jaundice](#) (yellowing of the skin or eyes).

Drowsiness or dizziness may last longer in older adults. Use caution to avoid falling or accidental injury.

**After you stop using Xanax**, get medical help right away if you have symptoms such as: unusual muscle movements, being more active or talkative, sudden and severe changes in mood or behavior, confusion, hallucinations, seizures,

suicidal thoughts or actions.

Some withdrawal symptoms may last up to 12 months or longer after stopping this medicine suddenly. Tell your doctor if you have ongoing anxiety, depression, problems with memory or thinking, trouble sleeping, ringing in your ears, a burning or prickly feeling, or a crawling sensation under your skin.

This is not a complete list of side effects and others may occur. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

 [Xanax side effects](#) (more detail)

## Related/similar drugs

### Cymbalta

Cymbalta (duloxetine) is used to treat major depressive disorder, general anxiety disorder and ...

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6.3 / 10

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### Ativan

Ativan is a benzodiazepine used to treat anxiety disorders or anxiety associated with depression ...

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## Diazepam

Diazepam is used to treat anxiety disorders, alcohol withdrawal symptoms, or muscle spasms. Learn ...

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Prozac (fluoxetine) is an SSRI antidepressant used to treat depression, OCD, panic disorder ...

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## Venlafaxine

Venlafaxine is used to treat major depressive disorder, anxiety, and panic disorder. Learn about ...

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## Zoloft

Zoloft is an antidepressant used to treat major depression, obsessive-

compulsive disorder, panic ...

### Reviews & ratings

7.3 / 10

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## Lorazepam

Lorazepam is in a group of drugs called benzodiazepines and is used to treat anxiety disorders ...

### Reviews & ratings

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## Lexapro

Lexapro is used to treat anxiety and major depressive disorder. Learn about side effects ...

### Reviews & ratings

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## What other drugs will affect Xanax?

Sometimes it is not safe to use certain medicines at the same time. Some drugs can affect your blood levels of other drugs you use, which may increase side effects or make the medicines less effective.

**Taking Xanax with other drugs that make you sleepy or slow your breathing can cause dangerous side effects or death.** Ask your doctor before using opioid medication, a sleeping pill, a muscle relaxer, or medicine for anxiety or seizures.

Many drugs can interact with alprazolam, and some drugs should not be used at the same time. Tell your doctor about all other medicines you use. This includes prescription and over-the-counter medicines, [vitamins](#), and [herbal products](#). Not all possible interactions are listed here.

 [Xanax drug interactions](#) (more detail)

## Does Xanax interact with my other drugs?

Enter medications to view a detailed interaction report using our [Drug Interaction Checker](#).

Xanax

+

Enter a drug name

Add

## Popular FAQ

How long does Xanax last for / stay in your system?



Does Xanax help you sleep?



How does Xanax make you feel?



What is Farmapram called in the US?



Is Xanax a narcotic (opioid) drug / controlled substance?



Why is Xanax so addictive?



## More FAQ

- [Valium vs Xanax: Which is better?](#)
- [Klonopin vs Xanax - How are they different?](#)
- [Lorazepam vs Xanax: What is the difference?](#)

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## Patient resources

### Other brands

[Niravam](#)

## Professional resources

- [Xanax prescribing information](#)
- [Alprazolam \(AHFS Monograph\)](#)

### Other brands

[Alprazolam Intensol](#), [Niravam](#)

## Other formulations

- [Xanax XR](#)

## Related treatment guides

- [Anxiety](#)
- [Panic Disorder](#)

## Further information

Remember, keep this and all other medicines out of the reach of children, never share your medicines with others, and use Xanax only for the indication prescribed.

Always consult your healthcare provider to ensure the information displayed on this page applies to your personal circumstances.

[Medical Disclaimer](#)

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### DRUG STATUS

#### Availability

**Rx** Prescription only

## Pregnancy & Lactation



Risk data available

## CSA Schedule\*

4

Some potential for abuse

## Approval History



Drug history at FDA



## User Reviews & Ratings

8.6 / 10

[915 Reviews](#)

## Images

[Xanax 2 mg \(X ANA X 2\)](#)



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