

[Home](#)

2. Ativan

# Ativan

**Generic name:** [lorazepam](#) [ *lor-A-ze-pam* ]**Drug classes:** [Benzodiazepine anticonvulsants](#), [Benzodiazepines](#), [Miscellaneous antiemetics](#)Medically reviewed by [Kaci Durbin, MD](#). Last updated on Jun 1, 2023.[Uses](#) [Warnings](#) [Before taking](#) [Dosage](#) [Side effects](#) [Interactions](#) [FAQ](#)

## What is Ativan?

Ativan (lorazepam) belongs to a class of medications called benzodiazepines. It is thought that benzodiazepines work by enhancing the activity of certain neurotransmitters in the brain.

Ativan is used in adults and children at least 12 years old to treat [anxiety](#) disorders.

Ativan is also used to treat insomnia caused by anxiety or temporary situational stress.

Ativan is sometimes used to treat nausea and vomiting from cancer treatment and to control agitation caused by alcohol withdrawal.

## Warnings

**Ativan can slow or stop your breathing, especially if you have recently used an opioid medication, alcohol, or other drugs that can slow your breathing. These effects can be fatal.**

MISUSE OF ATIVAN CAN CAUSE ADDICTION, OVERDOSE, OR DEATH. Keep this medicine where others cannot get to it.

Lorazepam may be habit-forming and should be used only by the person it was prescribed for. Ativan should never be shared with another person, especially someone who has a history of drug abuse or addiction.

Do not stop using Ativan 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 Ativan 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.

**Do not use Ativan if you are pregnant.** Lorazepam can cause birth defects or life-threatening withdrawal symptoms in a newborn.

You should not use this medicine if you have narrow-angle glaucoma, severe respiratory insufficiency, myasthenia gravis, or if you are allergic to Valium or a similar medicine.

## Before taking this medicine

You should not use Ativan if you have:

- narrow-angle [glaucoma](#); or
- a history of allergic reaction to any benzodiazepine (lorazepam, [alprazolam](#), [diazepam](#), [Valium](#), [Xanax](#), [Versed](#), [Klonopin](#), and others).

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

- [asthma](#), chronic obstructive pulmonary disease ([COPD](#)), [sleep apnea](#), or other breathing disorder;
- drug or alcohol addiction;
- [depression](#), mental illness or [psychosis](#), mood changes, or suicidal thoughts or actions;
- [seizures](#);
- an allergy to [aspirin](#) or yellow food dye; or
- kidney or liver disease.

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

If you are pregnant, your name may be listed on a pregnancy registry to track the effects of lorazepam on the baby.

You should not breastfeed.

If you do breastfeed, tell your doctor if you notice [drowsiness](#), feeding problems, or slow weight gain in the nursing baby.

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

## How should I take Ativan?

Take Ativan exactly as prescribed by your doctor. Follow the directions on your prescription label and read all medication guides or instruction sheets. Never use Ativan 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 Ativan with another person, especially someone with a history of drug addiction. MISUSE CAN CAUSE ADDICTION, OVERDOSE, OR DEATH.** Keep the medicine where others cannot get to it. Selling or giving away this medicine is against the law.

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

Store Ativan tablets tightly closed at room temperature, away from moisture and heat.

Keep your medicine in a place where no one can use it improperly.

## Dosing information

### Usual Adult Dose for Anxiety:

Initial dose: 2 to 3 mg orally per day, given 2 to 3 times per day

Maintenance dose: 1 to 2 mg orally 2 to 3 times a day

Uses:

- Management of anxiety disorders
- Short-term relief of the symptoms of anxiety or anxiety associated with depressive symptoms

### Usual Adult Dose for Insomnia:

2 to 4 mg orally once a day at bedtime

Comments:

- The dosage should be increased gradually when needed to help avoid adverse effects.
- Clinical studies have not evaluated this drug for efficacy in long-term treatment (e.g., greater than 4 months).

Use: Management of insomnia due to anxiety of transient situational stress

### Usual Geriatric Dose for Anxiety:

Older or debilitated patients:

- Initial dose: 1 to 2 mg orally per day, given in divided doses
- Management of anxiety disorders
- Short-term relief of the symptoms of anxiety or anxiety associated with depressive symptoms

### Usual Pediatric Dose for Anxiety:

12 years or older:

- Initial dose: 2 to 3 mg orally per day, given 2 to 3 times per day
- Maintenance dose: 1 to 2 mg orally 2 to 3 times a day
- The daily dosage may vary from 1 to 10 mg/day.
- The dosage should be increased gradually when needed to help avoid adverse effects.
- When higher dosage is indicated, the evening dose should be increased before the daytime doses.
- Use of anxiolytic agents is typically not needed to treat anxiety/tension associated with the stress of everyday life.
- Clinical studies have not evaluated this drug for efficacy in long-term treatment (e.g., greater than 4 months).

Uses:

- Management of anxiety disorders
- Short-term relief of the symptoms of anxiety or anxiety associated with depressive symptoms

### Usual Pediatric Dose for Insomnia:

12 years or older: 2 to 4 mg orally once a day at bedtime

Comments:

- For debilitated patients, an initial dosage of 1 to 2 mg/day in divided doses is recommended.
- The dosage should be increased gradually when needed to help avoid adverse effects.
- Clinical studies have not evaluated this drug for efficacy in long-term treatment (e.g., greater than 4 months).

 [Detailed Ativan 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 lorazepam can be fatal if you also drink alcohol or use other drugs that cause drowsiness or slow breathing.**

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

## What should I avoid while taking Ativan?

**Do not drink alcohol.** Dangerous side effects or death could occur.

Avoid driving or hazardous activity until you know how Ativan will affect you. Dizziness or drowsiness can cause falls, accidents, or severe injuries.

## Ativan side effects

Get emergency medical help if you have **signs of an allergic reaction to Ativan:** hives; difficulty breathing; swelling of your face, lips, tongue, or throat.

Lorazepam 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.

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

- severe drowsiness;
- unusual changes in mood or behavior, being agitated or talkative;
- sudden restless feeling or excitement;
- seizures, depression, thinking problems, thoughts of suicide or hurting yourself;
- confusion, aggression, hallucinations;
- sleep problems ([insomnia](#));
- vision changes; or

- dark urine, 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.

**Common Ativan side effects may include:**

- dizziness, [sedation](#), drowsiness;
- weakness; or
- feeling unsteady.

You will need frequent blood tests to check your blood counts and liver function.

**After you stop using Ativan**, seek 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 Ativan 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.

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

## Related/similar drugs

### Diazepam

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

#### Reviews & ratings

8.4 / 10

[884 Reviews](#)

[View more](#)

### Olanzapine

Olanzapine (brand name Zyprexa) is an atypical antipsychotic that may be used to treat adults and ...

#### Reviews & ratings

5.9 / 10

[1,091 Reviews](#)

[View more](#)

[View more](#)

#### FEATURED

### Ozempic

Learn about Ozempic (semaglutide) for type 2 diabetes treatment, weight management, cardiovascular ...

#### Reviews & ratings

6.6 / 10

[1,504 Reviews](#)

[View more](#)

### Zoloft

Zoloft is an antidepressant used to treat major depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder, panic ...

#### Reviews & ratings

7.3 / 10

[1,972 Reviews](#)

[View more](#)

### Xanax

Xanax (alprazolam) is a benzodiazepine medication used to treat anxiety and panic disorders ...

#### Reviews & ratings

8.6 / 10

[915 Reviews](#)

[View more](#)

### Prozac

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

#### Reviews & ratings

7.2 / 10

[1,239 Reviews](#)

[View more](#)

## Clonazepam

Clonazepam is used to treat seizures and panic disorder. Learn about side effects, interactions and ...

### Reviews & ratings

8.2 / 10

[2,176 Reviews](#)

[View more](#)

## Cymbalta

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

### Reviews & ratings

6.3 / 10

[1,899 Reviews](#)

[View more](#)

## Buspirone

Buspirone is used to treat symptoms of anxiety, such as fear, tension, irritability and dizziness ...

### Reviews & ratings

5.9 / 10

[1,357 Reviews](#)

[View more](#)

## Alprazolam

Alprazolam is used to treat anxiety disorders, panic disorders, and anxiety. Learn about side ...

### Reviews & ratings

8.6 / 10

[1,486 Reviews](#)

[View more](#)

**What other drugs will affect Ativan?**

**Taking Ativan with other drugs that 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.

Tell your doctor about all your other medicines, especially:

- valproate, [probenecid](#), [aminophylline](#), or [theophylline](#);
- medicine to treat mental illness; or
- medicine that contains an antihistamine (such as sleep medicine, cold or allergy medicine).

This list is not complete and many other drugs may interact with lorazepam. This includes prescription and over-the-counter medicines, [vitamins](#), and [herbal products](#). Not all possible drug interactions are listed here.

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

## Does Ativan interact with my other drugs?

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

Ativan

+

Enter a drug name

Add

## Ingredients

**Active ingredient:** lorazepam

**Inactive ingredients:** lactose monohydrate, magnesium stearate, microcrystalline cellulose, and polacrillin potassium.

## Manufacturer

**Bausch Health US. LLC**, Bridgewater, NJ 08807, US.

## Popular FAQ

How long does it take for Ativan to work?



## More FAQ

- [Ativan vs Xanax - What is the difference?](#)
- [Lorazepam vs Xanax: What is the difference?](#)

[View more FAQ...](#)

## References



## More about Ativan (lorazepam)

- [Check interactions](#)
- [Compare alternatives](#)
- [Pricing & coupons](#)
- [Reviews \(479\)](#)
- [Drug images](#)
- [Latest FDA alerts \(5\)](#)
- [Side effects](#)
- [Dosage information](#)
- [Patient tips](#)
- [During pregnancy](#)
- [Generic availability](#)
- [Support group](#)
- [Drug class: benzodiazepine anticonvulsants](#)
- [Breastfeeding](#)

## Patient resources

- [Ativan \(Lorazepam Tablets\) patient information](#)

## Other brands

[Loreev XR](#)

## Professional resources

- [Ativan prescribing information](#)
- [Ativan Tablets \(FDA\)](#)
- [Lorazepam \(AHFS Monograph\)](#)

## Other brands

[Lorazepam Intensol](#), [Loreev XR](#), [Ativan Injection](#)

## Related treatment guides

- [Anxiety](#)
- [Dysautonomia](#)
- [Insomnia](#)
- [ICU Agitation](#)

## Further information

Remember, keep this and all other medicines out of the reach of children, never share your medicines with others, and use Ativan 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](#)

Copyright 1996-2025 Cerner Multum, Inc. Version: 10.04.

### DRUG STATUS

#### Availability

**Rx** Prescription only

#### [Pregnancy & Lactation](#)

 Risk data available

#### CSA Schedule\*

**4** Some potential for abuse



#### Approval History

**10+ years** FDA approved 1977



## User Reviews & Ratings

8.0 / 10

[479 Reviews](#)

## Images

[Ativan 1 mg \(A BPI 64\)](#)



[View larger images](#)

## Drugs.com Mobile App

Access drug & treatment information, identify pills, check interactions and set up personal medication records.



## About

[About Drugs.com](#)

[Advertising policy](#)

[Attribution & citations](#)

## Terms & privacy

[Terms of use](#)

[Editorial policy](#)

[Privacy policy](#)

## Support

[Help center](#)

[Sitemap](#)

[Contact us](#)



[Subscribe to our newsletter](#) for the latest medication news, new drug approvals and FDA alerts.

**Drugs.com** provides accurate and independent information on more than 24,000 prescription drugs, over-the-counter medicines and natural products. This material is provided for educational purposes only and is not intended for medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Data sources include Micromedex (updated 7 Apr 2025), Cerner Multum™ (updated 13 Apr 2025), ASHP (updated 10 Apr 2025) and others.



Ad Choices  
ADVERTISEMENT



Copyright © 2000-2025 Drugs.com. All rights reserved.