



[Home](#)

2. Valium

# Valium

**Generic name:** [diazepam](#) (oral) [ dye-AZ-e-pam ]

**Drug classes:** [Benzodiazepine anticonvulsants](#), [Benzodiazepines](#)

Medically reviewed by [Philip Thornton, DipPharm](#). Last updated on Dec 4, 2024.

[Uses](#) [Warnings](#) [Before taking](#) [Dosage](#) [Side effects](#) [Interactions](#) [FAQ](#)

## What is Valium?

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

Valium is used to treat [anxiety](#) disorders, or [alcohol withdrawal](#) symptoms.

Valium is sometimes used with other medications to treat muscle spasms and stiffness, or [seizures](#).

## Warnings

You should not use Valium if you are allergic to diazepam or similar medicines (Ativan, Klonopin, Xanax, and others), or if you have [myasthenia gravis](#), severe [liver disease](#), narrow-angle [glaucoma](#), a severe breathing problem, or [sleep apnea](#).

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

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

Do not stop using this medicine 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 Valium 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.

## Before taking this medicine

You should not use Valium if you are allergic to diazepam, or if you have:

- [myasthenia gravis](#) (a muscle weakness disorder);
- a severe breathing problem;

- [sleep apnea](#) (breathing stops during sleep);
- narrow-angle [glaucoma](#);
- untreated or uncontrolled open-angle glaucoma; or
- severe liver disease.

Valium should not be given to a child younger than 6 months old. **Do not give this medicine to a child without a doctor's advice.**

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

- breathing problems;
- glaucoma;
- kidney or liver disease;
- seizures (unless you are taking diazepam to treat a seizure disorder);
- a drug or alcohol addiction; or
- [depression](#), a [mood disorder](#), or suicidal thoughts or behavior.

Some people have thoughts about suicide while taking Valium. Stay alert to changes in your mood or symptoms. Your family or caregivers should also watch for sudden changes in your behavior.

**May harm an unborn baby. Do not use if you are pregnant or may become pregnant.** If you use Valium during pregnancy, your baby could be born with life-threatening withdrawal symptoms, and may need medical treatment for several weeks.

**Do not start or stop seizure medication during pregnancy without your doctor's advice.** Diazepam may harm an unborn baby, but having a seizure during pregnancy could harm both mother and baby. Preventing seizures may outweigh these risks. **Tell your doctor right away if you become pregnant.**

There may be other seizure medications that are safer to use during pregnancy.

You should not breastfeed.

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

## How should I take Valium?

Take Valium exactly as prescribed by your doctor. Follow the directions on your prescription label and read all medication guides or instruction sheets. Never use Valium 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 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.

Measure liquid medicine with the supplied measuring device (not a kitchen spoon).

Valium should be used for only a short time. Do not take this medicine for longer than 4 months without your doctor's advice.

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

You will need frequent medical tests.

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

 [Detailed Valium 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 diazepam 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 extreme drowsiness, [loss of balance](#) or coordination, limp or weak muscles, slow breathing, or coma.

## What should I avoid while taking Valium?

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

Grapefruit may interact with diazepam and lead to unwanted side effects. Avoid the use of grapefruit products.

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

## Valium side effects

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

Diazepam 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.

Tell your doctor right away if you have new or sudden changes in mood or behavior, including new or worse depression or anxiety, [panic attacks](#), trouble sleeping, or if you feel impulsive, irritable, agitated, hostile, aggressive, restless, more active or talkative, or have thoughts about suicide or hurting yourself.

Call your doctor at once if you have:

- severe drowsiness or dizziness;

- trouble breathing;
- confusion, paranoia; or
- new or worsening seizures.

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

Common Valium side effects may include:

- drowsiness;
- feeling tired;
- muscle weakness; or
- problems with balance or muscle movement.

**After you stop using Valium**, 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.

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

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## What other drugs will affect Valium?

**Taking Valium 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.

Other drugs may interact with diazepam, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, [vitamins](#), and [herbal products](#). Tell your doctor about all other medicines you use.

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

## Does Valium interact with my other drugs?

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

Valium

+

Enter a drug name

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## Patient resources

### Other brands

[Valtoco](#), [Diastat](#), [Diastat AcuDial](#), [Diazepam Intensol](#), ... +2 more

## Professional resources

- [Valium prescribing information](#)
- [Diazepam \(AHFS Monograph\)](#)

### Other brands

Valtoco, Diastat, Libervant

Related treatment guides

- [Anxiety](#)
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Further information

Remember, keep this and all other medicines out of the reach of children, never share your medicines with others, and use Valium 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	
	FDA approved 1963

User Reviews & Ratings

8.6 / 10

[341 Reviews](#)

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