

Lorazepam (Ativan®)

ALAMEDA COUNTY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CARE SERVICES

Client's Name _____ Date _____

Initial Medication Instructions _____

What does this medication help to treat?

- Symptoms of anxiety (tension, restlessness, fearful feelings, insomnia)
- Insomnia (trouble sleeping)

Panic disorder

Lorazepam is sometimes prescribed for other uses; ask your prescriber or pharmacist for more information.

Other Information

- The effects of lorazepam usually occur within 15 to 30 minutes after taking the medication.
- Lorazepam can be habit-forming. Do not take a larger dose, take it more often or for a longer time than your prescriber tells you.
- Tolerance may develop with long-term or excessive use, making the medication less effective.
- Stopping the medication suddenly can worsen your condition and cause withdrawal symptoms (anxiousness, sleeplessness and irritability). When discontinuing therapy, the dose should be decreased gradually over time as determined by your prescriber.
- Pregnancy: Lorazepam has been shown to have adverse effects on embryo/fetal and postnatal development. Tell your prescriber if you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant and use an effective form of birth control to keep from getting pregnant. If you think you have become pregnant while taking this medication, call your prescriber right away.
- Lactation: Lorazepam is excreted in the milk of lactating women. Women should not nurse while on this medication. Talk to your prescriber if you are breast-feeding.

Side Effects and Management

Common (greater than 10 in 100 clients on this medication)

Drowsiness	Talk to your prescriber about taking more of your dose at bedtime.
Lightheadedness, memory impairment, irritability, depression	May be signs that your dose is too high, talk to your prescriber about lowering your dose.
Loss of coordination	Talk to your prescriber.
Appetite changes, weight changes	Adopt a regular healthy diet of low to moderate calories, and intake of fruits and vegetables and exercise regularly (at least 30 minutes each day for at least 3 times a week) to prevent weight gain associated with medication use.
Dry Mouth	Suck on sugarless gum or candy or melt bits of ice in your mouth. Call your prescriber if your mouth feels dry for more than 2 weeks.

Uncommon (~1 to 10 in 100 clients on this medication)

Nightmares or abnormal dreams	Consult with your prescriber.
Dizziness	Get up slowly, and dangle your feet when rising from a chair, talk to your prescriber.
Difficulty breathing	Talk to your prescriber. Tell your prescriber if you are taking narcotic pain medication or sleep medication in addition to lorazepam.
Rash	Talk to your prescriber
Low blood pressure	
Loss of coordination	
Memory Disturbances	

References: Clinical Pharmacology, LexiComp 2011

Note: This information is not intended to cover all possible uses, precautions, interactions or adverse effects for this medication. If you have further questions about the medications you are taking check with your health care professional.