

Respiratory

Lorazepam for patients with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)

This leaflet is for patients with respiratory conditions such as COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease) who have anxiety related to their breathlessness.

About lorazepam

Lorazepam belongs to a group of medicines called benzodiazepines. It helps to relieve anxiety and sleep problems by increasing the levels of a calming chemical in your brain. It can be used short or long term.

Why have you been prescribed lorazepam?

It can be used to treat symptoms of anxiety associated with COPD. It can help to make you feel calm.

Before taking lorazepam

- Inform the person who prescribed it to you of any allergies that you have and any medicines that you take.
- The most common side effect is feeling sleepy (drowsy). Do not drive, ride a bike, or use tools or machinery if lorazepam makes you feel sleepy.
- Do not drink alcohol while taking lorazepam. It can make you sleep deeply.



Patient Information

Dosage and strength

The usual dose for treating anxiety in COPD is 0.5mg (half a 1mg tablet) 1 to 2 times a day. However, this may be decreased or increased depending on your symptoms. Do not stop taking this medicine without first talking to your doctor or COPD team.

Can you become addicted to lorazepam?

Lorazepam is not likely to be addictive if you take a low dose. If you have previous or current problems with alcohol or drugs, you're more likely to become addicted. Please speak to your doctor or COPD team for another option.

Driving

You can drive when taking lorazepam. But we recommend not to drive when you start taking lorazepam until it is clear how sleepy it will make you feel. Do not drive any vehicle or ride a bike if you feel sleepy, if you have blurred vision, or you're unable to concentrate.

If you forget to take lorazepam

If it is less than 3 hours since you missed a dose, take it as soon as you remember. If more than 3 hours have passed, skip the missed dose and continue the next dose as normal. Do not take a double dose.

Side effects

Lorazepam may make you feel sleepy, you may have muscle weakness and you may have problems with coordination or controlling movements.

It happens rarely, but you may have these serious side effects:

- shallow breathing
- skin or whites of your eyes turn yellow
- difficulty remembering
- hallucinations
- falls
- mood changes. These can become serious and are more likely if you're over 65.

Report any of the above side effects to your GP or COPD team.

Patient Information

Contact information

If you would like more information about lorazepam, please contact the person who prescribed it to you.

This leaflet was produced by the Community COPD service.
Telephone: 024 7696 4167

If you would like information regarding Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, please go to our website.

www.uhcw.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets/medicine/respiratory

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