

Ativan (lorazepam) basics

Helps you relax. Ativan (lorazepam) is an effective medicine for occasional or short-term anxiety. It's less likely to have drug interactions, but more likely to cause withdrawal symptoms compared to similar drugs.

What to expect when starting

Here's when people typically experience benefits as well as some possible side effects. Your experience may be different.



† Data on frequency of side effects is not available.

Tips from pharmacists

- Can cause temporary dizziness and drowsiness.
- Take only as much as your doctor prescribes. Taking more than directed or taking this for a long time can cause you to become dependent on it.
- Not safe to use with alcohol.
- Use caution or avoid use in older adults.

Risks and warnings

The FDA has identified these as possible serious or life-threatening risks with this medication. Contact your doctor if you experience any of these.

Severe sedation with opioid use

Combining Ativan (lorazepam) with certain pain medicines called opioids can cause a life-threatening interaction that causes you to stop breathing. It is very important not to take these types of medicines together. Seek emergency help if you feel like you are having trouble breathing or can't wake up very easily after taking Ativan (lorazepam).

Tolerance and dependence

If you use Ativan (lorazepam) for 4 weeks or more, it's likely that your body will develop tolerance to it, which means that more of the medication is needed to achieve the same effect. You're also likely to become physically dependent on the medication, which means that you'll feel withdrawal symptoms if you stop taking it all at once. You can avoid withdrawal by slowly weaning off of the medication with the help of a doctor. Take Ativan (lorazepam) exactly how your doctor told you to take it.

Withdrawal

Stopping Ativan (lorazepam) suddenly may cause withdrawal symptoms such as nausea, anxiety, agitation, flu-like symptoms, trouble sleeping, and muscle pain. Work with your doctor to gradually reduce your dose, to minimize these withdrawal symptoms.