

## Patient Education

### ALPRAZOLAM - ORAL

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** The following information is intended to supplement, not substitute for, the expertise and judgment of your physician, pharmacist or other healthcare professional. It should not be construed to indicate that use of the drug is safe, appropriate, or effective for you. Consult your healthcare professional before using this drug.

#### ALPRAZOLAM - ORAL

(al-PRAZ-oh-lam)

COMMON BRAND NAME(S): Xanax

#### USES:

Alprazolam is used to treat anxiety and panic disorders. It belongs to a class of medications called benzodiazepines which act on the brain and nerves (central nervous system) to produce a calming effect. It works by enhancing the effects of a certain natural chemical in the body (GABA).

#### HOW TO USE:

Take this medication by mouth as directed by your doctor. Dosage is based on your medical condition and response to therapy.

This medication may cause dependence, especially if it has been used regularly for an extended period of time, or if it has been used in high doses. In such cases, if you suddenly stop this drug, withdrawal reactions including seizures may occur. Report any such reactions to your doctor immediately. When stopping extended, regular treatment with this drug, the dosage should be gradually reduced as directed to help prevent withdrawal reactions. Consult your doctor or pharmacist for more details.

Though it is very unlikely to occur, this medication can also result in abnormal drug-seeking behavior (addiction/habit-forming). Do not increase your dose, take it more frequently, or use it for a longer period of time than prescribed. Properly stop this medication when so directed. This will lessen the chances of becoming addicted.

When used for an extended period, this medication may not work as well and may require different dosing. Talk with your doctor if this medication stops working well.

Avoid eating grapefruit or drinking grapefruit juice while being treated with this medication unless your doctor instructs you otherwise. Grapefruit juice can increase the amount of certain medications in your bloodstream. Consult your doctor or pharmacist for more details.

Inform your doctor if your condition persists or worsens.

#### SIDE EFFECTS:

Drowsiness or dizziness may occur. If any of these effects persist or worsen, notify your doctor or pharmacist promptly.

Tell your doctor immediately if any of these unlikely but serious side effects occur: mental/mood changes, slurred speech, clumsiness, trouble walking, decreased/increased interest in sex.

Tell your doctor immediately if any of these highly unlikely but very serious side effects occur: yellowing eyes or skin, signs of infection (e.g., persistent sore throat, fever).

A serious allergic reaction to this drug is unlikely, but seek immediate medical attention if it occurs. Symptoms of a serious allergic reaction include: rash, itching, swelling, severe dizziness, trouble breathing.

If you notice other effects not listed above, contact your doctor or pharmacist.

#### **PRECAUTIONS:**

Before taking alprazolam, tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are allergic to it; or to other benzodiazepines (e.g., diazepam, lorazepam); or if you have any other allergies.

Before using this medication, tell your doctor or pharmacist your medical history, especially of: liver disease, kidney disease, severe lung/breathing problems (e.g., COPD, sleep apnea), drug or alcohol abuse.

This drug may make you dizzy or drowsy; use caution engaging in activities requiring alertness such as driving or using machinery. Limit alcoholic beverages.

Caution is advised when using this drug in the elderly because they may be more sensitive to its side effects, especially loss of coordination and drowsiness.

Alprazolam is not recommended for use during pregnancy due to the potential for fetal harm. Consult your doctor for more details.

This drug passes into breast milk and may have undesirable effects on a nursing infant. Therefore, breast-feeding while using this medication is not recommended. Consult your doctor before breast-feeding.

#### **DRUG INTERACTIONS:**

See also the How to Use section.

This drug should not be used with the following medications because very serious interactions may occur: certain azole antifungals (e.g., itraconazole, ketoconazole), delavirdine, sodium oxybate.

If you are currently using any of these medications, tell your doctor or pharmacist before starting alprazolam.

Before using this medication, tell your doctor or pharmacist of all prescription and nonprescription/herbal products you may use, especially of: clozapine, digoxin, disulfiram, kava.

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you take drugs that affect the removal of alprazolam from your system (CYP 3A4 substrates, inhibitors and inducers) such as: other azole antifungals (e.g., fluconazole, voriconazole), certain anti-depressants (e.g., fluoxetine, fluvoxamine, nefazodone), certain anti-seizure medications (e.g., phenytoin, phenobarbital), cimetidine, macrolide antibiotics (e.g., erythromycin, clarithromycin), rifamycins (e.g., rifampin), ritonavir, St John's wort.

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you take drugs that cause drowsiness such as: antihistamines that cause drowsiness (e.g., diphenhydramine), anti-seizure drugs (e.g., carbamazepine), medicine for sleep (e.g., sedatives), muscle relaxants, narcotic pain relievers (e.g., codeine),

psychiatric medicines (e.g., phenothiazines such as chlorpromazine, tricyclic anti-depressants such as amitriptyline), tranquilizers.

Check the labels on all your medicines (e.g., cough-and-cold products) because they may contain ingredients which cause drowsiness. Ask your pharmacist about the safe use of those products.

Cigarette smoking decreases blood levels of this medication (through liver enzyme induction). Tell your doctor if you smoke or if you have recently stopped smoking because your dose may need to be adjusted.

Do not start or stop any medicine without doctor or pharmacist approval.

**OVERDOSE:**

If overdose is suspected, contact your local poison control center or emergency room immediately. US residents can call the US national poison hotline at 1-800-222-1222. Canadian residents should call their local poison control center directly. Symptoms of overdose may include: severe drowsiness, slowed/reduced reflexes, slowed breathing, loss of consciousness.

**NOTES:**

Do not share this medication with others. It is against the law.

If this drug is used for an extended period of time, laboratory and/or medical tests (e.g., liver function tests, complete blood count) may be performed periodically to check for side effects. Consult your doctor for more details.

**MISSED DOSE:**

If you miss a dose, use it as soon as you remember. If it is near the time of the next dose, skip the missed dose and resume your usual dosing schedule. Do not double the dose to catch up.

**STORAGE:**

Store at room temperature between 59-86 degrees F (15-30 degrees C) away from light and moisture. Do not store in the bathroom. Keep all medicines away from children and pets.