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PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# Lorazepam

This information from Lexicomp® explains what you need to know about this medication, including what it's used for, how to take it, its side effects, and when to call your healthcare provider.

## Brand Names: US

Ativan; LORazepam Intensol

## Brand Names: Canada

APO-LORazepam; Ativan; DOM-LORazepam [DSC]; PHL-LORazepam [DSC]; PMS-LORazepam; PRO-LORazepam; TEVA-LORazepam

## Warning

- This drug is a benzodiazepine. The use of a benzodiazepine drug along with opioid drugs has led to very bad side effects. Side effects that have happened include slowed or trouble breathing and death. Opioid drugs include drugs like codeine, oxycodone, and morphine. Opioid drugs are used to treat pain and some are used to treat cough. Talk with the doctor.
- If your child is taking this drug with an opioid drug, get medical help right away if your child feels very sleepy or dizzy; if your child has slow, shallow, or trouble breathing; or if your child passes out. Get medical help right away if your child does not respond, does not answer or react like normal, or will not wake up.

## What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat anxiety.
- It is used to treat upset stomach and throwing up.
- It is used to treat seizures.
- It is used to calm a child before a procedure.

- It may be given to your child for other reasons. Talk with the doctor.

## **What do I need to tell the doctor BEFORE my child takes this drug?**

- If your child has an allergy to this drug or any part of this drug.
- If your child is allergic to any drugs like this one or any other drugs, foods, or other substances. Tell the doctor about the allergy and what signs your child had, like rash; hives; itching; shortness of breath; wheezing; cough; swelling of face, lips, tongue, or throat; or any other signs.
- If your child has any of these health problems: Glaucoma, low mood (depression), or certain mental problems.
- If your child has sleep apnea, talk with the doctor.

This is not a list of all drugs or health problems that interact with this drug.

Tell the doctor and pharmacist about all of your child's drugs (prescription or OTC, natural products, vitamins) and health problems. You must check to make sure that it is safe for your child to take this drug with all of his/her drugs and health problems. Do not start, stop, or change the dose of any drug your child takes without checking with the doctor.

## **What are some things I need to know or do while my child takes this drug?**

### **All products:**

- Tell all of your child's health care providers that your child is taking this drug. This includes your child's doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- Alcohol may interact with this drug. Be sure your child does not drink alcohol.
- Talk with the doctor before giving your child other drugs and natural products that may slow your child's actions.
- Have your child's blood work checked if he/she is on this drug for a long time. Talk with your child's doctor.
- This drug may be habit-forming with long-term use.

- Do not have your child use longer than you have been told by your child's doctor.
- If your child has been taking this drug on a regular basis and stops taking it all of a sudden, your child may have signs of withdrawal. Do not stop giving this drug all of a sudden without calling the doctor. Tell the doctor if your child has any bad effects.
- Use with care in children. Talk with the doctor.

**If your child is pregnant or breast-feeding a baby:**

- This drug may cause harm to the unborn baby if your child takes it during pregnancy. If your child is pregnant or gets pregnant while taking this drug, call the doctor right away.
- Tell the doctor if your child is breast-feeding a baby. You will need to talk about any risks to the baby.

**All oral products:**

- Have your child avoid tasks or actions that call for alertness until you see how this drug affects your child. These are things like riding a bike, playing sports, or using items such as scissors, lawnmowers, electric scooters, toy cars, or motorized vehicles.

**Injection:**

- Have your child avoid tasks or actions that call for alertness for 1 to 2 full days after your child gets this drug and until the effects of this drug have worn off. These include things like riding a bike, playing sports, or using items such as scissors, lawnmowers, electric scooters, toy cars, or motorized vehicles.
- Do not let your child get out of bed without help for at least 8 hours after your child uses this drug. Your child may fall and hurt him/herself.
- Some products have benzyl alcohol. Do not give a product that has benzyl alcohol in it to a newborn or infant. Talk with the doctor to see if this product has benzyl alcohol in it.

**For a procedure:**

- Studies in young animals and children have shown that frequent or long-term use of anesthesia drugs or drugs used for sleep in children younger than 3 years of age may lead to long-term brain problems. This may also happen in unborn babies if the mother uses this drug during the third trimester of pregnancy. Talk with the doctor.

## **What are some side effects that I need to call my child's doctor about right away?**

**WARNING/CAUTION:** Even though it may be rare, some people may have very bad and sometimes deadly side effects when taking a drug. Tell your child's doctor or get medical help right away if your child has any of the following signs or symptoms that may be related to a very bad side effect:

- Signs of an allergic reaction, like rash; hives; itching; red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin with or without fever; wheezing; tightness in the chest or throat; trouble breathing, swallowing, or talking; unusual hoarseness; or swelling of the mouth, face, lips, tongue, or throat.
- Signs of low mood (depression), thoughts of killing yourself, nervousness, emotional ups and downs, thinking that is not normal, anxiety, or lack of interest in life.
- Hallucinations (seeing or hearing things that are not there).
- Change in how you act.
- Change in balance.
- Feeling confused.
- Memory problems or loss.
- Feeling very tired or weak.
- Very bad dizziness or passing out.
- Change in eyesight.
- Muscle weakness.
- Dark urine or yellow skin or eyes.

## **What are some other side effects of this drug?**

All drugs may cause side effects. However, many people have no side effects or

only have minor side effects. Call your child's doctor or get medical help if any of these side effects or any other side effects bother your child or do not go away:

**All products:**

- Feeling sleepy.
- Dizziness.
- Headache.
- Feeling tired or weak.

**Injection:**

- Irritation where the shot is given.

These are not all of the side effects that may occur. If you have questions about side effects, call your child's doctor. Call your child's doctor for medical advice about side effects.

You may report side effects to your national health agency.

**How is this drug best given?**

Give this drug as ordered by your child's doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

**All oral products:**

- Give this drug with or without food. Give with food if it causes an upset stomach.

**Liquid (solution):**

- Use the dropper that comes with this drug to measure the drug.
- Mix the liquid with water, juice, soda, applesauce, or pudding before giving it to your child.
- Give the mixture right away. Do not store for use at a later time.

**Under the tongue (sublingual) tablet:**

- Place under your child's tongue and let dissolve all the way before swallowing. Do not let your child chew, suck, or swallow the tablet.
- Do not let your child swallow for at least 2 minutes after using this drug.

**Injection:**

- It is given as a shot into a muscle or vein.

**What do I do if my child misses a dose?**

**All oral products:**

- If your child takes this drug on a regular basis, give a missed dose as soon as you think about it.
- Give a missed dose as soon as you think about it.
- If it is close to the time for your child's next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your child's normal time.
- Do not give 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.
- Many times this drug is given on an as needed basis. Do not give to your child more often than told by the doctor.

**Injection:**

- Call your child's doctor to find out what to do.

**How do I store and/or throw out this drug?**

**Tablets and under the tongue (sublingual) tablets:**

- Store at room temperature.
- Store in a dry place. Do not store in a bathroom.

**Liquid (solution):**

- Store in a refrigerator. Do not freeze.
- Throw away any part not used after 3 months.

**All oral products:**

- Protect from light.

### **Injection:**

- If you need to store this drug at home, talk with your child's doctor, nurse, or pharmacist about how to store it.

### **All products:**

- Keep all drugs in a safe place. Keep all drugs out of the reach of children and pets.
- Throw away unused or expired drugs. Do not flush down a toilet or pour down a drain unless you are told to do so. Check with your pharmacist if you have questions about the best way to throw out drugs. There may be drug take-back programs in your area.

### **General drug facts**

- If your child's symptoms or health problems do not get better or if they become worse, call your child's doctor.
- Do not share your child's drug with others and do not give anyone else's drug to your child.
- Keep a list of all your child's drugs (prescription, natural products, vitamins, OTC) with you. Give this list to your child's doctor.
- Talk with your child's doctor before giving your child any new drug, including prescription or OTC, natural products, or vitamins.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your child's doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
- If you think there has been an overdose, call your poison control center or get medical care right away. Be ready to tell or show what was taken, how much, and when it happened.

### **Consumer Information Use and Disclaimer**

This information should not be used to decide whether or not to take this medicine or any other medicine. Only the healthcare provider has the

knowledge and training to decide which medicines are right for a specific patient. This information does not endorse any medicine as safe, effective, or approved for treating any patient or health condition. This is only a brief summary of general information about this medicine. It does NOT include all information about the possible uses, directions, warnings, precautions, interactions, adverse effects, or risks that may apply to this medicine. This information is not specific medical advice and does not replace information you receive from the healthcare provider. You must talk with the healthcare provider for complete information about the risks and benefits of using this medicine.

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If you have any questions, contact a member of your healthcare team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5:00 PM, during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit [www.mskcc.org/pe](http://www.mskcc.org/pe) to search our virtual library.

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