Oxford COPD Service

Lorazepam

Information for patients

Working in partnership:
Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and
Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust
Lorazepam is a medicine which is usually used for the treatment of anxiety, but it has also been shown to be effective in reducing the feeling of breathlessness.

This medicine is taken as a tablet. The dose normally prescribed is between 0.5mg (half a 1mg tablet) to 1mg (one 1mg tablet). It is usually prescribed to be taken at night and when needed in the day for anxiety related breathlessness (up to a maximum of 4 times in 24 hours). It is advisable to take it 20-30 minutes before any activity that may make you breathless, such as washing and dressing.

**How to take lorazepam**

**If your lorazepam tablet is white, it should be swallowed with water.**

**If your lorazepam tablet is blue, it will dissolve under your tongue.** This will help it to absorb into the soft tissues in your mouth and to act more quickly. Before taking this form of lorazepam it is best to drink some water, as this will help the tablet to dissolve under your tongue.

**What are the most common side effects?**

Lorazepam might make you feel sleepy. If you are on other medicines which also make you feel sleepy, then you should discuss this with your GP before starting lorazepam. Because of the possibility of sleepiness, we advise you to take the first dose before going to sleep at night and to see how drowsy you feel in the morning. If you do not feel drowsy, you can start to try using the lorazepam during the day, when you feel you need it. If you do feel drowsy then you should discuss this with your GP or Respiratory Nurse.
When you start taking lorazepam during the day, we advise that you rest immediately after you take the dose. You also should not drive when you start taking lorazepam, until it is clear how drowsy it makes you feel.

Occasionally, you may also experience light headedness and a dry mouth after taking lorazepam. **If you experience any of these side effects each time you take lorazepam, please let your GP or your Respiratory Nurse know.**

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**How to contact us**

If you have any further questions please do get in touch. Useful phone numbers are listed below.

**Oxford Health Community Respiratory Nursing Team**

**Blackbird Leys Office**
Tel: 01865 904 418

**Banbury Office**
Tel: 01295 229 501

**Churchill Hospital Office**
Tel: 01865 225 472

**Oxford Centre for Respiratory Medicine**

**COPD Team Consultant Secretary**
Tel: 01865 225 234
If you have a specific requirement, need an interpreter, a document in Easy Read, another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call 01865 221 473 or email PALS@ouh.nhs.uk

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