

Alprazolam

Class: Benzodiazepine

Indications: Treatment of anxiety disorder (GAD); short-term relief of symptoms of anxiety; panic disorder, with or without agoraphobia; anxiety associated with depression.

Unlabeled: Anxiety in children

Available dosage form in the hospital: Tablet, Oral: (0.25 mg, 0.5 mg, 1 mg, 2 mg).

Trade Names:

Dosage: Note: Treatment >4 months should be re-evaluated to determine the patient's continued need for the drug.

-Anxiety: Oral:

Immediate release: Initial: 0.25-0.5 mg 3 times/day; titrate dose upward every 3-4 days; usual maximum: 4 mg/day. Patients requiring doses >4 mg/day should be increased cautiously. Periodic reassessment and consideration of dosage reduction is recommended.

-Panic disorder: Oral:

- *Immediate release:* Initial: 0.5 mg 3 times/day; dose may be increased every 3-4 days in increments ≤ 1 mg/day. Mean effective dosage: 5-6 mg/day; some patients may require much as 10 mg/day.

- *Extended release:* 0.5-1 mg once daily; may increase dose every 3-4 days in increments ≤ 1 mg/day (range: 3-6 mg/day).

- *Switching from immediate release to extended release:* Patients may be switched to extended release tablets by taking the total daily dose of the immediate release tablets and giving it once daily using the extended release preparation.

-Preoperative anxiety (unlabeled use): Oral: 0.5 mg 60-90 minutes before procedure (De Witte, 2002).

-Dose reduction: Abrupt discontinuation should be avoided. Daily dose may be decreased by 0.5 mg every 3 days; however, some patients may require a slower reduction. If withdrawal symptoms occur, resume previous dose and discontinue on a less rapid schedule.

Dosing: Geriatric

Note: Elderly patients may be more sensitive to the effects of alprazolam including ataxia and oversedation. The elderly may also have impaired renal function leading to decreased clearance. Titrate gradually, if needed and tolerated.

Immediate release: Initial 0.25 mg 2-3 times/day

Extended release: Initial: 0.5 mg once daily

Renal impairment:

No dosage adjustment provided in manufacturer's labeling; however, use caution.

Hepatic impairment:

Advanced liver disease:

Immediate release: 0.25 mg 2-3 times/day; titrate gradually if needed and tolerated.

Extended release: 0.5 mg once daily; titrate gradually if needed and tolerate

Common side effects:

Central nervous system: Abnormal coordination, cognitive disorder, depression, drowsiness, fatigue, irritability, lightheadedness, memory impairment, sedation, somnolence

Endocrine & metabolic: Libido decreased

Gastrointestinal: Appetite increased/decreased, constipation, weight gain/loss, xerostomia

Genitourinary: Micturition difficulty

Neuromuscular & skeletal: Dysarthria

Respiratory: Nasal congestion.

Pregnancy Risk Factor: D