Valium - Diazepam – Patient Information Sheet

Valium/Diazepam is used in the treatment of anxiety disorders and for short-term relief of the symptoms of anxiety. It belongs to a class of drugs known as benzodiazepines.

It is also used to relieve the symptoms of acute alcohol withdrawal, to relax muscles, to relieve the uncontrolled muscle movements caused by cerebral palsy and paralysis of the lower body and limbs, to control involuntary movement of the hands (athetosis), to relax tight, aching muscles, and, along with other medications, to treat convulsive disorders such as epilepsy.

Brand name: Valium

Generic name: Diazepam

Most important fact about Valium/Diazepam

Valium/Diazepam can be habit-forming or addictive. You may experience withdrawal symptoms if you stop using this drug abruptly. Discontinue or change your dose only on your doctor's advice.

How should you take Valium/Diazepam?

Take Valium/Diazepam exactly as prescribed. If you are taking Valium/Diazepam for epilepsy, make sure you take it every day at the same time.

If you miss a dose of Valium/Diazepam

Take it as soon as you remember if it is within an hour or so of the scheduled time. If you do not remember until later, skip the dose you missed and go back to your regular schedule. Never take 2 doses at the same time.
Storage instructions for Valium/Diazepam

Store away from heat, light, and moisture.

What side effects may occur when taking Valium/Diazepam?

Side effects cannot be anticipated. If any develop or change in intensity, inform your doctor as soon as possible. Only your doctor can determine if it is safe for you to continue taking Valium/Diazepam.

More common side effects of Valium/Diazepam may include:

Anxiety, drowsiness, fatigue, light-headedness, loss of muscle coordination

Side effects due to a rapid decrease in dose or abrupt withdrawal from Valium/Diazepam:

Abdominal and muscle cramps, convulsions, sweating, tremors, vomiting

Why should Valium/Diazepam not be prescribed?

If you are sensitive to or have ever had an allergic reaction to Valium/Diazepam, you should not take this medication. Do not take Valium/Diazepam if you have the eye condition known as acute narrow-angle glaucoma.

Anxiety or tension related to everyday stress usually does not require treatment with such a powerful drug as Valium/Diazepam. Discuss your symptoms thoroughly with your doctor.

Valium/Diazepam should not be prescribed if you are being treated for mental disorders more serious than anxiety.

Special warnings about Valium/Diazepam

Valium/Diazepam may cause you to become drowsy or less alert; therefore, you should not drive or operate dangerous machinery or
participate in any hazardous activity that requires full mental alertness until you know how this drug affects you.

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If you have liver or kidney problems, use Valium/Diazepam cautiously.

**Possible food and drug interactions when taking Valium/Diazepam**

Valium/Diazepam slows down the central nervous system and may intensify the effects of alcohol. Do not drink alcohol while taking this medication.

If Valium/Diazepam is taken with certain other drugs, the effects of either could be increased, decreased, or altered.

**It is especially important to check with your doctor before combining Valium/Diazepam with any of the following:**

Antiseizure drugs such as Dilantin
Antidepressant drugs such as Elavil and Prozac
Antipsychotic drugs such as Mellaril and chlorpromazine
Barbiturates such as phenobarbital
Cimetidine (Tagamet)
Digoxin (Lanoxin)
Disulfiram (Antabuse)
Fluoxetine (Prozac)
Isoniazid (Rifamate)
Levodopa (Larodopa, Sinemet)
MAO inhibitors (antidepressant drugs such as Nardil)
Narcotics such as Percocet
Omeprazole (Prilosec)
Oral contraceptives
Propoxyphene (Darvon)
Ranitidine (Zantac)
Rifampin (Rifadin)

Special information on Valium/Diazepam if you are pregnant or breastfeeding

Do not take Valium/Diazepam if you are pregnant or planning to become pregnant. There is an increased risk of birth defects.

If Valium/Diazepam is essential to your health, your doctor may advise you to discontinue breastfeeding until your treatment is finished.

Recommended dosage of Valium/Diazepam

ADULTS

Treatment of Anxiety Disorders and Short-Term Relief of the Symptoms of Anxiety
The usual dose, depending upon severity of symptoms, is 2 milligrams to 10 milligrams 2 to 4 times daily.

Acute Alcohol Withdrawal
The usual dose is 10 milligrams 3 or 4 times during the first 24 hours, then 5 milligrams 3 or 4 times daily as needed.

Relief of Muscle Spasm
The usual dose is 2 milligrams to 10 milligrams 3 or 4 times daily.

**Convulsive Disorders**

The usual dose is 2 milligrams to 10 milligrams 2 to 4 times daily.

**CHILDREN**

Valium/Diazepam should not be given to children under 6 months of age.

The usual starting dose for children over 6 months is 1 to 2.5 milligrams 3 or 4 times a day. Your doctor may increase the dosage gradually if needed.

**OLDER ADULTS**

The usual dosage is 2 milligrams to 2.5 milligrams once or twice a day, which your doctor will increase as needed. Your doctor will limit the dosage to the smallest effective amount because older people are more apt to become over sedated or uncoordinated.

**Over dosage of Valium/Diazepam**

Any medication taken in excess can have serious consequences. If you suspect an overdose of Valium/Diazepam, seek medical attention immediately.

**Symptoms of Valium/Diazepam overdose may include:**

Coma, confusion, diminished reflexes, sleepiness

**Valium/Diazepam Effectiveness**

Many people today wait too long to get treatment for anxiety. The fact is, Valium/Diazepam is the safest and easiest medication to use for anxiety, and its effectiveness is world renown. If you are worried about the safety and effectiveness of Valium/Diazepam, worry no more. The World Health
Organization lists Valium/Diazepam on its “Essential Drugs List” because it is one of the most frequently prescribed medications for a wide range of conditions.

Whether it’s anxiety, insomnia, even seizures, Valium/Diazepam has proven to be very effective time and time again.