Xanax-Alprazolam – Patient Information Sheet

Xanax/Alprazolam is a tranquilizer used in the short-term relief of symptoms of anxiety or the treatment of anxiety disorders. Anxiety disorder is marked by unrealistic worry or excessive fears and concerns. Anxiety associated with depression is also responsive to Xanax/Alprazolam.

Xanax/Alprazolam and the extended-release formulation, Xanax/Alprazolam XR, are also used in the treatment of panic disorder, which appears as unexpected panic attacks and may be accompanied by a fear of open or public places called agoraphobia. Only your doctor can diagnose panic disorder and best advise you about treatment.

Some doctors prescribe Xanax/Alprazolam to treat alcohol withdrawal, fear of open spaces and strangers, depression, irritable bowel syndrome, and premenstrual syndrome.

**Brand Name:** Xanax

**Generic Name:** Alprazolam

**Most important fact about Xanax/Alprazolam**

Tolerance and dependence can occur with the use of Xanax/Alprazolam. You may experience withdrawal symptoms if you suddenly stop using the drug or reduce the dosage too quickly. Withdrawal symptoms are listed under "What side effects may occur?" Xanax/Alprazolam dosage should be gradually reduced and only your doctor should advise you on how to discontinue or change your dose.

**How should you take Xanax/Alprazolam?**

Xanax/Alprazolam may be taken with or without food. Take it exactly as prescribed. Do not chew, crush, or break the Xanax/Alprazolam XR tablets.
If you miss a dose of Xanax/Alprazolam

If you are less than 1 hour late, take it as soon as you remember. Otherwise skip the dose and go back to your regular schedule. Never take 2 doses at the same time.

Storage instructions for Xanax/Alprazolam

Store Xanax/Alprazolam at room temperature.

What side effects may occur when taking Xanax/Alprazolam?

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 Xanax/Alprazolam. Your doctor should periodically reassess the need for this drug.

Side effects of Xanax/Alprazolam are usually seen at the beginning of treatment and disappear with continued medication. However, if dosage is increased, side effects will be more likely.

Side effects of Xanax/Alprazolam may include:

Decreased libido, drowsiness, fatigue, impaired coordination, memory impairment, speech difficulties, weight changes.

Side effects of Xanax/Alprazolam XR may include:

Constipation, decreased libido, depression, drowsiness, fatigue, impaired coordination, memory problems, mental impairment, nausea, sedation, sleepiness, speech difficulties, weight changes.

Side effects due to a rapid decrease in dose or abrupt withdrawal from Xanax/Alprazolam or Xanax/Alprazolam XR:
Anxiety, blurred vision, decreased concentration, decreased mental clarity, depression, diarrhea, headache, heightened awareness of noise or bright lights, hot flushes, impaired sense of smell, insomnia, loss of appetite, loss of reality, muscle cramps, nervousness, rapid breathing, seizures, tingling sensation, tremor, twitching, weight loss.

**Why should Xanax/Alprazolam not be prescribed?**

If you are sensitive to or have ever had an allergic reaction to Xanax/Alprazolam or other tranquilizers, you should not take this medication. Also avoid Xanax/Alprazolam while taking the antifungal drugs Sporanox or Nizoral. Make sure that your doctor is aware of any drug reactions that you have experienced.

Do not take Xanax/Alprazolam if you have been diagnosed with the eye condition called narrow-angle glaucoma.

Anxiety or tension related to everyday stress usually does not require treatment with Xanax/Alprazolam. Discuss your symptoms thoroughly with your doctor.

**Special warnings about Xanax/Alprazolam**

Xanax/Alprazolam may cause you to become drowsy or less alert; therefore, driving or operating dangerous machinery or participating in any hazardous activity that requires full mental alertness is not recommended.

If you are being treated for panic disorder, you may need to take a higher dose of Xanax/Alprazolam than for anxiety alone. High doses more than 4 milligrams a day of Xanax/Alprazolam taken for long intervals may cause emotional and physical dependence. It is important that your doctor supervise you carefully when you are using this medication.

As with all antianxiety medication, there is a small chance that Xanax/Alprazolam could encourage suicidal thoughts or episodes of euphoria known as mania. If you notice any new or unusual symptoms after starting Xanax/Alprazolam, call your doctor immediately.
Side effects of Xanax/Alprazolam may include:
Decreased libido, drowsiness, fatigue, impaired coordination, memory impairment, speech difficulties, weight changes.

Side effects of Xanax/Alprazolam XR may include:
Constipation, decreased libido, depression, drowsiness, fatigue, impaired coordination, memory problems, mental impairment, nausea, sedation, sleepiness, speech difficulties, weight changes.

Side effects due to a rapid decrease in dose or abrupt withdrawal from Xanax/Alprazolam or Xanax/Alprazolam XR:
Anxiety, blurred vision, decreased concentration, decreased mental clarity, depression, diarrhea, headache, heightened awareness of noise or bright lights, hot flushes, impaired sense of smell, insomnia, loss of appetite, loss of reality, muscle cramps, nervousness, rapid breathing, seizures, tingling sensation, tremor, twitching, weight loss.

Why should Xanax/Alprazolam not be prescribed?
If you are sensitive to or have ever had an allergic reaction to Xanax/Alprazolam or other tranquilizers, you should not take this medication. Also avoid Xanax/Alprazolam while taking the antifungal drugs Sporanox or Nizoral. Make sure that your doctor is aware of any drug reactions that you have experienced.

Do not take Xanax/Alprazolam if you have been diagnosed with the eye condition called narrow-angle glaucoma.

Anxiety or tension related to everyday stress usually does not require treatment with Xanax/Alprazolam. Discuss your symptoms thoroughly with your doctor.

Special warnings about Xanax/Alprazolam
Xanax/Alprazolam may cause you to become drowsy or less alert; therefore, driving or operating dangerous machinery or participating in any hazardous activity that requires full mental alertness is not recommended.

If you are being treated for panic disorder, you may need to take a higher dose of Xanax/Alprazolam than for anxiety alone. High doses more than 4 milligrams a day of Xanax/Alprazolam taken for long intervals may cause emotional and physical dependence. It is important that your doctor supervise you carefully when you are using Xanax/Alprazolam.

As with all antianxiety medication, there is a small chance that Xanax/Alprazolam could encourage suicidal thoughts or episodes of euphoria known as mania. If you notice any new or unusual symptoms after starting Xanax/Alprazolam, call your doctor immediately.

Xanax/Alprazolam should be used with caution in elderly or weak patients, and in those with lung disease, alcoholic liver disease, or any disorder that could hinder the elimination of the drug.

**Possible food and drug interactions when taking Xanax/Alprazolam**

Xanax/Alprazolam may intensify the effect of alcohol. Do not drink alcohol while taking Xanax/Alprazolam.

Never combine Xanax/Alprazolam with Sporanox or Nizoral. These drugs cause a buildup of Xanax/Alprazolam in the body.

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

**It is important to check with your doctor before combining Xanax/Alprazolam with the following:**

Amiodarone (Cordarone)

Antihistamines such as Benadryl and Tavist

Carbamazepine (Tegretol)

Certain antibiotics such as Biaxin and erythromycin
Certain antidepressant drugs, including Elavil, Norpramin, and Tofranil
Cimetidine (Tagamet)
Cyclosporine (Neoral, Sandimmune)
Digoxin (Lanoxin)
Diltiazem (Cardizem)
Disulfiram (Antabuse)
Ergotamine
Fluoxetine (Prozac)
Fluvoxamine
Grapefruit juice
Isoniazid (Rifamate)
Major tranquilizers such as Mellaril and chlorpromazine
Nefazodone
Nicardipine (Cardene)
Nifedipine (Adalat, Procardia)
Oral contraceptives
Other central nervous system depressants such as Valium and Demerol
Paroxetine (Paxil)
Propoxyphene (Darvon)
Sertraline (Zoloft)

Special information if you are pregnant or breastfeeding when taking Xanax/Alprazolam

Do not take Xanax/Alprazolam if you are pregnant or planning to become pregnant. There is an increased risk of respiratory problems and muscular weakness in your baby. Infants may also experience withdrawal symptoms. Xanax/Alprazolam may appear in breast milk and could affect a nursing infant. If this medication is essential to your health, your doctor
may advise you to stop breastfeeding until your treatment with Xanax/Alprazolam is finished.

**Recommended dosages of Xanax/Alprazolam**

**ADULTS**

**Anxiety disorder**

The usual starting dose of Xanax/Alprazolam is 0.25 to 0.5 milligram taken 3 times a day. The dose may be increased every 3 to 4 days to a maximum daily dose of 4 milligrams, divided into smaller doses.

**Panic disorder**

The usual starting dose of regular Xanax/Alprazolam is 0.5 milligram 3 times a day. This dose can be increased by 1 milligram a day every 3 or 4 days. You may be given a dose from 1 up to a total of 10 milligrams, according to your needs. The typical dose is 5 to 6 milligrams a day.

If you're taking Xanax XR, the usual starting dose is 0.5 to 1 milligram once a day taken in the morning. Depending on your response, the dose may be gradually increased by no more than 1 milligram every 3 or 4 days. The usual effective dose is 3 to 6 milligrams a day. Some people may need a larger dose to relieve their symptoms. Others, including older adults and those with liver disease or other serious illnesses, may need to use lower doses.

**CHILDREN**

Safety and effectiveness have not been established in children under 18 years of age.

**OLDER ADULTS**

The usual starting dose for an anxiety disorder is 0.25 milligram, 2 or 3 times daily. The starting dose of Xanax XR is 0.5 milligrams once a day. This dose may be gradually increased if needed and tolerated.

**PATIENTS SWITCHING FROM Xanax TO Xanax XR**
If you're taking divided doses of Xanax, the doctor will switch you to a once-daily dose of Xanax XR that equals the current amount you're taking. If your symptoms return after switching, the dose can be increased as needed.

**Over dosage with Xanax/Alprazolam**

An overdose of Xanax/Alprazolam, alone or after combining it with alcohol, can be fatal. If you suspect an overdose, seek medical attention immediately.

**Symptoms of Xanax/Alprazolam overdose may include:**

Confusion, coma, impaired coordination, sleepiness, slowed reaction time