

Midazolam

Names The generic drug name is midazolam (mid' ay zoe lam). The brand name is Ativan®. There may be other names for this medication.

How is it Given and What is it Used For? Midazolam belongs to a class of drugs called benzodiazepines. It works by slowing activity in the brain. It is available as an intravenous infusion, an intramuscular injection, a nasal spray (used for cluster headaches) and a syrup to take by mouth. Midazolam relieves anxiety and decreases consciousness (causes drowsiness). It may be used before medical procedures to prevent any memory of the event. It is also used to decrease consciousness in seriously ill people in ICU who are breathing with the help of a machine.

What Should I Tell My Doctor Before I Begin? Tell your doctor if you:

- are allergic to midazolam or have any other allergies
- are taking antidepressants; barbiturates; medications for anxiety, mental illness, or seizures; opiate medications; sedatives; sleeping pills; tranquilizers; or medications for HIV
- have glaucoma, a severe infection, lung disease, breathing problems, or heart disease
- have, or have ever had, kidney or liver disease
- have recently stopped drinking large amounts of alcohol
- are pregnant or breastfeeding

This drug may interact with other medications, increasing or decreasing their effectiveness or causing harmful side effects. Tell your doctor and pharmacist about any prescription or over-the-counter medications, vitamins, herbal or diet supplements that you are taking.

What Are Some Possible Side Effects?

- Headache
- Drowsiness, dizziness: Note this side effect may last longer in older adults. Take precautions to avoid falling.
- Nausea, vomiting
- Slow or shallow breathing
- Blurry vision

When Should I
Call the
Doctor?

Call 911 or go to the nearest hospital emergency department if you are not in the hospital and have signs of an allergic reaction: Swelling or tingling in your face, tongue, mouth, or throat; chest tightness; wheezing; trouble breathing or swallowing; dizziness, shortness of breath; heart palpitations; rapid, weak pulse; nausea.

Call your doctor immediately if you have:

- cough, wheezing, trouble breathing
- slow heart rate
- a feeling you may pass out
- tremors (shaking)
- confusion, agitation, usual thoughts or behavior

In case of overdose, call poison control at 1-800-222-1222. If patient has collapsed, had a seizure, has trouble breathing or you can't wake them, immediately call 911.

Symptoms of overdose

- Drowsiness, confusion, problems with balance and movement
- Slow reflexes
- Slow breathing and heartbeat
- Loss of consciousness

What Else
Should I Know
About
Midazolam?

- Midazolam may make you very drowsy and may affect your memory, thinking, and movements. Do not drive a car or do other activities that require you to be fully alert for at least 24 hours after receiving midazolam and until the effects of the medication have worn off.
- This medication can be habit-forming. Do not take a larger dose, take it more often, or for a longer time than your doctor tells you to. Tolerance may develop with long-term or excessive use, making the drug less effective.
- Do not stop taking this medication without talking to your doctor. Stopping the drug suddenly can worsen your condition and cause withdrawal symptoms (anxiousness, sleeplessness, and irritability). Your doctor probably will decrease your dose gradually.
- **Avoid alcohol;** it can make the side effects of midazolam worse.
- If you are over age 65, talk to your doctor about the risks and benefits of midazolam. Higher doses are more likely to cause serious side effects in older adults.
- Do not let anyone else take your medication.
- If you are having surgery, including dental surgery, tell the doctor or

dentist that you are taking midazolam. If you are keeping this medication at home, keep it in the container it came in, tightly closed, and out of reach of children. Store at room temperature and away from excess heat and moisture (not in the bathroom). Throw away any medication that is outdated or no longer needed. (See What Do I Do with Leftover Medication?)

- Keep all appointments with your doctor.
- If you would like more information, talk to your doctor or pharmacist.

What Do I Do with Leftover Medication?

The safest way to dispose of unused medication is to take it to an authorized drug disposal site:

- Roswell Park has a drug disposal container. It is located on the 1st floor of the main hospital just past the ATM machine.
- Call your pharmacy and ask if they have a take back box for unwanted or expired medications.
- You can search any of the following websites for a drug disposal location closest to you: New York *Take Back* programs for household drugs. Go to the NY Department of Conservation website www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/67720.html Click on "Find a free collection site near you"

If no drug take back sites are available in your area, **and** there are no specific disposal instructions in the medication's package insert, follow these steps to dispose of unused medications at home.

- Remove personal information on original container.
- Remove medication from original container and place whole pills in plastic bag or empty can that is sealable or has a lid.
- Mix medication (liquid or pills; do not crush tablets or capsules) with dirt, coffee grounds, cat litter, hand sanitizer, or ethyl alcohol. **Do not hide in food.**
- Place the mixture in a bag, box, or plastic tub that you can seal. Secure the container with strong tape.
- Place the sealed container with the mixture and the original container in your trash as close to trash collection day as possible.

If you have any questions regarding disposal of your medication you should call the provider who prescribed the medication or the pharmacy that dispensed the medication.