

You or your loved one is taking a medication called lorazepam (Ativan®). It can help stop or prevent seizures.

Lorazepam is available as a tablet or liquid, both of which can be swallowed. The liquid and tablet (crushed) can be used under the tongue if you or your loved one is unable to swallow. This medication may be included in a “kit” with other medications to use as needed to help treat new or worsening symptoms, or it may be used separately. Make sure to follow the hospice team’s instructions carefully when using lorazepam.

Possible side effects of lorazepam:

Seek emergency medical help if you or your loved one have any of the following signs of a severe allergic reaction:

- Swelling of the face lips, tongue, or throat
- Hives
- Difficulty breathing

Contact the hospice team immediately if you or your loved one is experiencing one or more of these serious side effects:

- Sensing things that seem real but are not
- Depression
- Behavioral or mood changes
- Thoughts of suicide
- Balance changes
- Confusion
- Trouble with memory
- Severe dizziness
- Passing out
- Vision changes
- Muscle weakness
- Dark urine
- Yellowing of skin or eyes
- Trouble breathing

Potential less serious side effects of using lorazepam may include:

- Fatigue, loss of strength and energy
- Drowsiness, sedation
- Dizziness
- Headache

Other things to be aware of when using lorazepam:

- Lorazepam may cause drowsiness and/or blurred vision, which may impair physical or mental abilities. You or your loved one should use caution when performing activities that require being alert (for example: driving or operating equipment).
- Avoid drinking alcohol with lorazepam, as it can increase the risk of side effects.
- In some people who have dementia, lorazepam may worsen irritation and/or agitation.
- Contact the hospice team if you or your loved one’s symptoms get worse or do not improve.

Reference: Clinical Pharmacology last accessed 10.31.23