

Clonazepam

Klonopin, a benzodiazepine, a calming medicine that also steadies the brain

Clonazepam steadies panic and certain seizures, and it lasts longer through the day than most medicines like it.

WHAT IT TREATS

Panic disorder, seizures

HOW YOU TAKE IT

Once or twice a day

WHEN IT WORKS

Within an hour

HABIT FORMING

Yes, your body adapts

⚠️ IMPORTANT SAFETY WARNING

Mixing **clonazepam** with opioids or alcohol can slow or stop your breathing. Your body comes to depend on it, so stopping suddenly can cause seizures and can be life-threatening. Only your prescriber tapers it. Store it safely; others may misuse it.

① WHAT THIS MEDICINE DOES

- **Clonazepam** is a benzodiazepine. It calms overactive electrical signaling in the brain, which eases panic and steadies seizures.
- It lasts longer than most medicines in its family, so it is often given once or twice a day instead of as needed.
- Being prescribed it does not mean anything is wrong with you. It is a standard treatment used deliberately and carefully.
- It does not treat the roots of anxiety. Therapy or a daily antidepressant usually does that work alongside it.

② HOW TO TAKE IT

- Take **clonazepam** at the same times each day, even on good days. Steady timing is what keeps panic and seizures from breaking through.
- You can take it with or without food. If it upsets your stomach, a few crackers or a piece of toast usually settles it.
- The dissolving wafers go straight on the tongue with dry hands. Do not push one through the foil; peel the backing off.
- If you miss a dose, take it when you remember unless the next one is close. Never take two at once to make up for it.
- Keep it in a spot children and visitors cannot reach. A locked box is worth the trouble, because one pill can harm a child.

🔧 WHAT TO EXPECT

- You will usually feel it within an hour, and the effect holds much of the day rather than fading after a few hours.
- For panic, many people notice fewer and milder attacks within the first **1 to 2 weeks** of a steady schedule.
- Some daytime sleepiness is normal in the first week or two and usually eases as your body gets used to it.
- Working looks like a steadier baseline, with fewer attacks and less bracing for the next one, not numbness.

♥️ COMMON SIDE EFFECTS

- Sleepiness and a slowed-down feeling are the most common effects, and they are strongest during the first two weeks.
- Unsteadiness and clumsiness are common. Falls are a real risk, so take stairs slowly and turn on lights at night.
- Memory and concentration can feel dulled. Keep notes for anything important until you see how it settles for you.
- Some people feel flat or less interested in things. That is worth telling your prescriber rather than waiting it out.
- Dizziness, dry mouth, or mild nausea can happen. Sip water, stand up slowly, and eat a little when you take it.
- Children and older adults sometimes get irritable or wound up instead of calm. Report that; it does not mean bad behavior.

⚠️ CALL YOUR PRESCRIBER OR GET HELP RIGHT AWAY IF

- Very slow or shallow breathing, blue lips, or being very hard to wake: call **911** right away.
- A seizure, or bad shaking and confusion after missed doses: call **911**. A sudden stop can do this.
- New or worse thoughts of hurting yourself: call your prescriber today, or call or text **988** if you might act.
- A fall with a head injury, or hours you simply cannot account for: call your prescriber the same day.

🚫 WHAT TO AVOID

- Opioid pain medicine plus **clonazepam** can stop your breathing. Make sure every prescriber and pharmacist knows about both.
- Alcohol slows your breathing the same way and the effects stack. There is no safe amount on a day you take this.
- Do not drive until you know how it affects you. Because it lasts a long time, grogginess can carry into the next morning.
- Ask your pharmacist before adding anything new, including cold medicine, sleep aids, and muscle relaxers that also cause drowsiness.
- If you are pregnant, nursing, or planning a pregnancy, tell your prescriber. Do not stop on your own while pregnant.

① STOPPING IT SAFELY

- Never stop suddenly. Your body adapts over time, and an abrupt stop can cause seizures that can be life-threatening.
- Because it leaves the body slowly, tapers here are gradual, often over months. Your prescriber sets each step.
- Coming down can bring rebound anxiety, poor sleep, and muscle aches. Slowing the taper usually works better than powering through.
- If you want to come off, say so early. It is a common goal and it goes far better with a plan than without one.

❓ QUESTIONS TO ASK

- Is this for daily use, or only when my anxiety spikes?
- What else am I taking that could slow my breathing with this?
- How would we taper this if I want to stop someday?
- Should I be worried about falls, and what can I do about that?

Where this information comes from

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NOTE

Sources are listed in APA 7th edition style. This handout is general information about a medicine, not medical advice, and it does not replace the instructions from your own prescriber or pharmacist. Never start, change, or stop a medicine on your own. If you think you are having a serious reaction, call your prescriber; if you cannot breathe, cannot stay awake, or are thinking of harming yourself, call 911 or 988 right away.