

Diazepam

Valium, Diastat, Valtoco, Libervant, a benzodiazepine, a long-acting calming medicine

Diazepam calms anxiety, muscle spasm, and seizure clusters, and it stays in your body far longer than most calming medicines.

WHAT IT TREATS

Anxiety, spasm, seizures

HOW YOU TAKE IT

By mouth, gel, or nasal spray

WHEN IT WORKS

Within 30 to 60 minutes

HABIT FORMING

Yes, your body adapts

⚠️ IMPORTANT SAFETY WARNING

Mixing **diazepam** 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

- **Diazepam** is a benzodiazepine. It calms the brain's alarm signaling and also relaxes tight, spasming muscles.
- It is used for anxiety, muscle spasm, alcohol withdrawal, and as a rescue treatment for clusters of seizures.
- It lingers in the body for a long time, so one dose can still be working the next day and even the day after.
- It handles the crisis, not the cause. Therapy or a daily medicine usually does the longer work alongside it.

⌚ HOW TO TAKE IT

- Take **diazepam** exactly as prescribed. Because it lasts a long time, doses are often spaced further apart than you expect.
- You can take tablets with or without food. A snack alongside helps if your stomach feels unsettled afterward.
- The rectal gel and nasal spray are rescue treatments. Have whoever is with you practice the steps before you ever need them.
- If you miss a scheduled dose, take it when you remember unless the next one is near. Do not double up to catch up.
- Store it out of reach of children and visitors, ideally locked away. One tablet can seriously harm a small child.

🔧 WHAT TO EXPECT

- Tablets usually take hold within **30 to 60 minutes**. Rescue forms work faster because they skip the stomach entirely.
- The effect fades slowly over a day or more, so you may feel calm, and a little slow, well past the dose itself.
- With daily use, it builds up in your body over about a week. Sleepiness that grows over days is worth reporting.
- Working looks like anxiety or spasm you can live around, or seizure clusters that break sooner, not a blank day.

♥️ COMMON SIDE EFFECTS

- Sleepiness is the most common effect and it can stretch into the next day because this one leaves the body slowly.
- Unsteadiness and clumsiness are common, and falls are a real risk. Take stairs slowly and light your path at night.
- Slowed thinking or patchy memory can happen. Keep written notes for anything important until you see how it settles.
- Muscle weakness can come along with the muscle relaxing. Be careful lifting, carrying, or climbing until you know.
- Dry mouth, blurred vision, or mild nausea can happen. Sip water and take it with a little food if that helps.
- A few people feel agitated or short-tempered instead of calm. Tell your prescriber rather than pushing through it.

⚠️ CALL YOUR PRESCRIBER OR GET HELP RIGHT AWAY IF

- Very slow or shallow breathing, blue lips, or being hard to wake: call **911** right away.
- A seizure, or heavy shaking and confusion after missed doses: call **911**. A sudden stop can cause 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 confusion that is new for you: call your prescriber the same day.

🚫 WHAT TO AVOID

- Opioid pain medicine plus **diazepam** can stop your breathing. Every prescriber and pharmacist you see must know about both.
- Alcohol slows your breathing the same way and the effects pile up. Skip alcohol entirely while you are taking this.
- Do not drive until you know how it affects you. Because it lingers, grogginess can still be there the next morning.
- Ask your pharmacist before adding sleep aids, muscle relaxers, cold medicine, or anything else that makes you drowsy.
- If you are pregnant, nursing, or planning a pregnancy, tell your prescriber. Do not stop on your own while pregnant.

⌚ STOPPING IT SAFELY

- Never stop suddenly. Your body adapts with regular use, and an abrupt stop can cause seizures that can be life-threatening.
- Because it clears so slowly, withdrawal can start days after a missed dose. That delay fools people, so follow the plan.
- Your prescriber writes the taper and adjusts the pace if it gets rough. Doing it alone or from an online plan is not safe.
- If you want to come off, say so early. It is a common and reasonable goal, and going slowly makes it far easier.

❓ QUESTIONS TO ASK

- How long does one dose actually stay in my system?
- Which of my medicines could slow my breathing along with this?
- Who should be trained to use my rescue form, and when?
- What would a safe taper look like when I am ready to stop?

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.