

CLONAZEPAM



Other names

Rivotril

Drug category

Benzodiazepine

Uses

Clonazepam is used for panic disorders and in all types of epilepsy.

Available forms

Tablet, liquid (1/20 of clobazam dose if converting)

Some potential side-effects (inform your doctor if you think you have a serious side-effect)

Drowsiness, unsteadiness, confusion, nausea, tolerance (the same dose has less effect over time), withdrawal effects (rapidly stopping can cause seizures)

Rare: Paradoxical seizure worsening or aggression

Not to be used if:

Lung disease, myasthenia gravis

Coma, alcohol/drug abuse

Liver or kidney disease (unless dose reduced)

Contraception, pregnancy and breastfeeding

Should try to avoid in pregnancy as it may increase risk of birth defects (not known) and may cause withdrawal symptoms or hypothermia in the baby. Avoid during breastfeeding.

Interactions with other drugs

May affect phenytoin levels; try not to use with other sedative medicines and avoid alcohol.

Monitoring

Optional routine blood tests to check liver and kidney function

How to use it

Day	Morning dose	Evening dose	(Other drugs)
Start date	Nil	500 micrograms	
Afterwards	Nil	1 milligram	

If 1mg does not help and you have no side-effects, then it can be increased to 2mg night or 1mg twice daily (more sedation than 2mg night dose but may help with day time seizures) after another 2 weeks.

Clonazepam is also very useful to use for a few days only at a time – for example, after the first seizure in someone who usually has clusters of seizures over 1-7 days, or in women with catamenial epilepsy (seizures linked to menstrual cycle).

Do not stop the drug suddenly. If reducing it after more than 2 weeks of use, then reduce in steps to 500 micrograms daily for 2 weeks, then 500 micrograms alternate days for 2 weeks, then stop.

This information is for guidance only. Always read the medicine information leaflet with any new medicine for full details.