

Benzodiazepines (Anxiolytics)

Medication*	Initial Oral Dose (mg)	Dosing Frequency	Formulation	Titration dose (mg) and Schedule	Average Total (mg)	Common Side Effects	Medication Administration
lorazepam (Ativan)	0.5	daily to bid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tablet • SL tablet • injection 	0.5 q3 to 7 days	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sedation • confusion • unsteady gait • risk of falls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Injection: IM or SC • keep injectables in fridge • SL tabs can be taken orally
oxazepam (Serax)	5	daily to bid	tablet	5 q3 to 7 days	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • as above 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nil
clonazepam (Rivotril)	0.25	daily to bid	tablet	0.25 - 0.5 q3 to 7 days	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • as above 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nil
Other							

*Please consult with the product monograph for more detailed information

1. Key Messages/Considerations:

- Start low and go slow;
- Strive for a good clinical trial - increase dose only until clinical effectiveness is achieved;
- Tolerance may occur;
- Caution: paradoxical disinhibition may occur (rare);
- Monitor for adverse effects especially when combining psychotropic medications;
- Reassess the need for continued therapy;
- Discontinuation of medication requires a taper;
- PRN doses may be used:
 - temporarily while determining the need for regular dosage administration;
 - in situations where break-through behavioural symptom(s) requires additional dosing.

2. References and other medication information:

- Canadian Consensus Conference on Diagnosis and Treatment of Dementia (CCCDTD4), 2012, retrieved July 30th, 2013 online from: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3516356/> .
- Clinical Handbook of Psychotropic Drugs, 18th Edition. (2009) Hogrefe and Huber.
- CPS - Compendium of Pharmaceutical and Specialities (2013).
- Lexicomp online drug information (www.online.lexi.com).
- P.I.E.C.E.S. Psychotropic Template (2009), retrieved online June 14th, 2013 from http://www.piecescanada.com/pdf/Psychotropic_Template_Jan09.pdf
- Stahl, Steven M (2007) Essential Psychopharmacology: The Prescriber's Guide. Cambridge University Press.
- Tool on Pharmacological Treatment of Behavioral Symptoms of Dementia in Long Term Care Facilities for Older Adults, based on: Canadian Coalition for Seniors' Mental Health (CCSMH) National Guidelines: The Assessment and Treatment of Mental Health Issues in Long Term Care Homes, retrieved online May 30th, 2013 from: http://www.ccsmh.ca/pdf/ccsmh_ltc_meds_front.pdf.