

DIAZEPAM
(Valium)

PHARMACOLOGIC CLASSIFICATION:

-benzodiazepine

THERAPEUTIC CLASSIFICATION:

-antianxiety agent
-anticonvulsant
-skeletal muscle relaxant
-amnesic agent
-sedative-hypnotic

MAIN INDICATIONS:

-major motor seizures
-status epilepticus
-pre-medication prior to cardioversion, pacing (relieves anxiety, may suppress memory recall)
-skeletal muscle relaxant (musculoskeletal disorders/mild muscle spasm)
-acute alcohol withdrawal
-acute anxiety states

MECHANISM OF ACTION:

-CNS depressant
-at low doses alleviates anxiety and agitation without sedation
-at higher doses causes sedation, sleep, and anesthesia
-blocks spinal cord interneuronal transmission, causing relaxation of skeletal muscles
-freely crosses the blood-brain barrier
-suppresses the spread of seizure activity through the motor cortex of the brain

CONTRAINDICATIONS:

-respiratory depression
-hypotension
-ETOH or other sedative drugs
-pregnancy
-hypersensitivity to drug
-infants under 6 months
-severe hypotension
-narrow-angle glaucoma

MAJOR SIDE EFFECTS:

-respiratory/cardiac arrest
-decreased LOC
-hypotension

- ataxia
- drowsiness
- slurred speech
- transient amnesia
- fatigue
- ataxia
- headache
- blurred vision

INTERACTIONS:

- potentiates the CNS depressant effects of phenothiazines, narcotics, barbiturates, alcohol, antihistamines, anesthetics, and tricyclic antidepressants
- oral contraceptives may impair the metabolism of diazepam

DOSAGE:

- Grand mal seizures/Status epilepticus: 5-10 mg IV push slowly
- Acute anxiety: 2-10 mg IV or IM
- Cardioversion/external pacing: 5-15 mg IV push slowly

SPECIAL INFORMATION:

- IV Valium has onset of 30 seconds and a half-life of only 10-15 minutes
- seizure activity may reoccur—additional doses may be required
- no mixing with other drugs (it will possibly react)
- never administer it unless you are also ready to resuscitate
- flumazenil can reverse adverse side effects
- safer than barbiturates, have less drug interactions, and are less likely to cause physical dependence

