Midazolam nasal spray

Being short of breath, or breathless, can be common and upsetting for people receiving palliative care. It can cause panic and anxiety. Midazolam can help to reduce that feeling of panic and anxiety. Your doctor or nurse can also sometimes advise you to use it for other reasons.

You spray midazolam into your nostrils and the medication is quickly absorbed into the lining of your nose. The medication achieves its full effect within 10 minutes.

How to use the spray

- Hold the bottle with your thumb at the base and the nozzle between your first and second fingers.
- If you're using the spray bottle for the first time, prime it by squeezing the pump until you see mist spraying from the nozzle.
- Keep your head upright and insert the nozzle into your nostril.
- Keep the spray bottle upright.
- Squeeze the pump with a firm even stroke. Don’t sniff. If you do, the medication will be lost in your lungs.
- Don’t tilt your head back while spraying. Having your head upright will help stop the liquid going down your throat.
- Give yourself one spray at a time into alternate nostrils, depending on how many sprays you’ve been prescribed.
- If the spray irritates your nose, you can spray it inside your cheeks instead.
- Keep the spray bottles in a cool dry place, but not in the fridge. Keep them out of the reach of children.
- The contents of the spray bottle expire one month after they're prepared by your pharmacy. Return any unused or part used bottles to your pharmacy.
- The spray bottles cost around $5 to $10.
Side effects
Midazolam can make you feel drowsy.

Important
Don't drive a car or operate heavy machinery if you're sleepy.

Sometimes people don't like the taste at the back of their throat, or the sensation in their nose, but this doesn't last long.

Midazolam can also cause nasal and eye irritation.

Keep a record of use
Keep a record of when you use your midazolam spray, so your doctor can check if it is working well for you. You should record:

- the date and time you used the spray
- whether it helped
- how long it took to work
- any side effects.

If you have any concerns about using the midazolam spray, see your GP.

Based on Using midazolam nasal spray, a patient/carer guide, Hutt Valley DHB. Adapted by HealthInfo clinical advisers. Last reviewed May 2018. Last updated August 2019.