

Patient Education

ZOLPIDEM - ORAL

IMPORTANT NOTE: The following information is intended to supplement, not substitute for, the expertise and judgment of your physician, pharmacist or other healthcare professional. It should not be construed to indicate that use of the drug is safe, appropriate, or effective for you. Consult your healthcare professional before using this drug.

ZOLPIDEM - ORAL

(ZOHL-pee-dem)

COMMON BRAND NAME(S): Ambien

USES:

This medication is used to treat patients with trouble sleeping (insomnia). It helps you fall asleep faster and sleep longer through the night. Zolpidem is a sedative/hypnotic which acts on the brain and nerves (central nervous system) to produce a calming effect. It works by enhancing the effects of a certain natural chemical (gamma-aminobutyric acid - GABA) in the body .

This medication is usually limited to short-term treatment periods of 1-2 weeks or less.

HOW TO USE:

Since this medication takes effect quickly, take it by mouth immediately before bedtime on an empty stomach, or as directed by your doctor.

Use this medication exactly as prescribed. Do not increase your dose, take it more frequently or use it for a longer period of time than prescribed because this drug can be habit-forming. If this drug is used for an extended period of time, do not suddenly stop using it without your doctor's approval. Some conditions may become worse when the drug is abruptly stopped. Your dose may need to be gradually decreased.

When used for an extended period, this medication may not work as well and may require different dosing. Talk with your doctor if this medication stops working well.

You may experience trouble sleeping the first few nights after you stop taking this medication. This is called rebound insomnia and it is normal. It will usually go away after 1-2 nights. If this effect continues, contact your doctor.

Read the Patient Information Leaflet available from your pharmacist.

Inform your doctor if your condition persists or worsens.

SIDE EFFECTS:

Daytime drowsiness, dizziness, lightheadedness, constipation, diarrhea, and dry mouth may occur. If any of these effects persist or worsen, notify your doctor or pharmacist promptly.

Although unlikely, this drug can infrequently cause memory loss. To avoid this effect, do not take a dose of this drug unless you have time for a full night's sleep that lasts at least 7-8 hours.

Tell your doctor immediately if any of these unlikely but serious side effects occur: fast/pounding heartbeat, unusual tiredness, new or worsening depression (rarely including thoughts of suicide), mental/mood changes, unsteadiness.

Tell your doctor immediately if any of these highly unlikely but very serious side effects occur: chest pain.

A serious allergic reaction to this drug is unlikely, but seek immediate medical attention if it occurs. Symptoms of a serious allergic reaction include: rash, itching, swelling, severe dizziness, trouble breathing.

If you notice other effects not listed above, contact your doctor or pharmacist.

PRECAUTIONS:

Before taking zolpidem, tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are allergic to it; or if you have any other allergies.

Before using this medication, tell your doctor or pharmacist your medical history, especially of: kidney disease, liver disease, depression, drug or alcohol dependency, lung/breathing problems (e.g., chronic obstructive pulmonary disease-COPD, sleep apnea).

This drug may make you dizzy or drowsy; use caution engaging in activities requiring alertness such as driving or using machinery. Avoid alcoholic beverages because they may increase the risk of this drug's side effects.

To minimize dizziness and lightheadedness, get up slowly when rising from a seated or lying position.

Caution is advised when using this drug in the elderly because they may be more sensitive to its effects, which may lead to an increased risk of falling.

This medication should be used during pregnancy only if clearly needed. Discuss the risks and benefits with your doctor.

A small amount of this medication passes into breast milk. Consult your doctor before breast-feeding.

DRUG INTERACTIONS:

This drug should not be used with the following medications because very serious interactions may occur: sodium oxybate.

If you are currently using any of these medications, tell your doctor or pharmacist before starting zolpidem.

Before using this medication, tell your doctor or pharmacist of all prescription and nonprescription/herbal products you may use, especially of: rifampin.

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you also take drugs that cause drowsiness such as: antihistamines that cause drowsiness (e.g., diphenhydramine), anti-anxiety drugs (e.g., diazepam), anti-seizure drugs (e.g., carbamazepine), muscle relaxants, narcotic pain relievers (e.g., codeine), psychiatric medicines (e.g., phenothiazines such as chlorpromazine or tricyclics such as amitriptyline), or tranquilizers.

Check the labels on all your medicines (e.g., cough-and-cold products) because they may contain ingredients that cause drowsiness. Ask your pharmacist about the safe use of those products.

Do not start or stop any medicine without doctor or pharmacist approval.

OVERDOSE:

If overdose is suspected, contact your local poison control center or emergency room immediately. US residents can call the US national poison hotline at 1-800-222-1222. Canadian residents should call their local poison control center directly. Symptoms of overdose may include slowed breathing or a deep sleep from which you cannot be awakened.

NOTES:

Do not share this medication with others. It is against the law.

If you require more than 2-3 weeks treatment, laboratory and/or medical tests should be performed to find the cause of your sleep problem. As you get older, your sleep pattern may naturally change and your sleep may be interrupted several times during the night. Consult your doctor or pharmacist for ways to improve your sleep routine without medication.

MISSED DOSE:

Take your dose at or near bedtime. If it is near the time of the next dose, skip the missed dose and resume your usual dosing schedule. Do not double the dose to catch up.

STORAGE:

Store at room temperature between 68-77 degrees F (20-25 degrees C) away from light and moisture. Do not store in the bathroom. Keep all medicines away from children and pets.