



## **Zolpidem: the hypnotic agent**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*After a long, draining day, all you want is to plop on your bed and sleep. For some, it's a blessing as it happens the minute their head touches the pillow. But for others, it's not that easy. If this issue persists for a long time then you need to see a doctor. Sleep medications are a lifesaver for patients facing sleep difficulty. We can find many sleeping aids in the market. Zolpidem is one of the few. However, it is not recommended to use sleeping aids for the long-term. Let's know more about this Drug.*

**Keywords:** Zolpidem, Hypnotic agent.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **What is Zolpidem?**

Zolpidem famous under the name Ambien is a sedative-hypnotic drug that was approved by the FDA in 1992.[2] It is used in the treatment of insomnia. Insomnia is a sleeping disorder in which the patient faces difficulty falling asleep and /or staying asleep. Zolpidem slows down the activity in the brain to allow sleeping. It reduces the time to fall asleep, increases the sleep and reduces the number of awakenings in patients with insomnia.

#### **What are the other brand Names?**

Zolpidem is sold under other brand names such as Ambien ®, Ambien ® CR, Edluar ®, Zolpimist ®, Intermezzo ®.

#### **How does Zolpidem work?**

Zolpidem increases the activity of a neurotransmitter (chemicals that act as a messenger between nerve cells) called GABA in the brain. GABA is known as a natural nerve-calming agent. It induces sleepiness, reduces anxiety and relaxes muscles.

#### **Why Zolpidem is beneficial?**

Zolpidem offers several benefits. Firstly, it tends to work very fast, generally within 30 minutes. Secondly, sleep problems improve within just 7-10 days of medication.

#### **How to consume zolpidem?**

It is advised to take zolpidem without food because a high-fat meal can reduce its absorption and effect.

**What is the correct dose?**

Elderly people are prescribed to receive 5 mg dosage [1]. 5 mg initial dose is recommended for women and 5-10mg mg for men before bedtime only when there are 7-8 hours to sleep [1].

**What happens if overdosed?**

Overdose of any medication is not good. In the case of Zolpidem, overdose leads to slowed breathing or a deep sleep from which awakening might be difficult. If the situation worsens then you need to see your doctor.

**What happens if you miss a dose?**

If a dose is missed, it is not advised to take this drug unless you have 7-8 hours to sleep afterwards else you may face problems the next day like, blurred or double vision, difficulty driving, reduced alertness.

**Is it safe for pregnant women?**

Currently, there are not enough conclusive studies done in pregnant women. It should only be used if potential benefits outweigh the potential risks. So it is advised to talk with your doctor if you are expecting or planning to have a baby [2]. Zolpidem is not recommended for women who are breastfeeding their babies.

**What are its side-effects?**

Like other drugs, zolpidem comes with some possible side effects which might include drowsiness, dizziness, weakness, loss of coordination. It can also cause nausea, constipation, diarrhoea, muscle pain, headache. In some rare cases, Zolpidem can lead to night-time behaviours such as sleepwalking or night-eating. This requires immediate attention from the health care provider. Though Zolpidem may be great for short-term relief from insomnia, it is not meant for long term uses. This drug can be habit-forming which means the patient might face trouble sleeping without it.

**Does Zolpidem interact with other drugs?**

Zolpidem can interact with other drugs and supplements and can cause side-effects. Consumption of opioids, antidepressants and other sedatives while taking zolpidem must be avoided.[3] Alcohol can even make the condition worse, so if you are an active drinker or partying at a winery, then you may need to stop using Zolpidem.

**How to store Zolpidem?**

Store this drug in a tight container at room temperature. Keep it away from moisture and light. Keep the drugs away from children and pets [3]. Do not flush the medicine in toilets. Do not use the drug if it gets expired. Discard the drug as per the given instructions.

**CONCLUSION****Things to keep in Mind**

Never share this medication with other people. You go against the law by doing so and in the real world; it is not cool to break the law. Leave your google IQ at home before recommending Zolpidem to anyone. Self-medication is something that needs to be stopped. Ever wondered why a doctor spends almost half of his/her life studying medicine? In this 24/7 digital age, people engage themselves in activities like surfing the internet, watching web-series to relax before bedtime. Eventually, it is becoming a habit and turning into insomnia. We are from the land of yoga and meditation but the sad part is we hardly perform it. Meditation and yoga help fight insomnia and is shown to reduce the use of sleeping pills. Plus there are no associated risks or side effects.

**REFERENCES**

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