

**Medication: Zolpidem 5 mg or 10 mg**

**What is Zolpidem?**

Zolpidem tablets are sleeping pills (hypnotics) that work on the brain to cause sleepiness. They may be used for the treatment of difficulties in falling asleep. The medication effects typically only last about 3 hours so it may not be helpful in keeping you asleep.

**Expected Benefit:**

- A benefit can be noticed on the first night
- In some patients, it loses its effectiveness after a while, and may need to be switched to another drug

**Watch for possible side effects:**

This list of side effects is important for you to be aware of; however, it is also important to remember that not all side effects happen to all people. Many of these less serious side effects will improve over the first few days of taking the medications.

If you have problems with these side effects talk with your doctor or pharmacist:

- Dizziness
- Off balance
- Blurred vision
- Rarely, some individuals will still feel drowsy the next morning
- Rarely, some individuals will feel agitated instead of drowsy

**Stopping the medication:**

When you stop taking zolpidem, your doctor may advise you to reduce the dose slowly to help prevent your sleep problems from returning.

**How to use this medication:**

- Take this medication with or without food

**Dosing Schedule:**

- Take just before bedtime because it has a quick onset of action
- Start with ½ tablet at bedtime (i.e., 2.5 mg or 5 mg depending on whether you are prescribed a 5 mg or 10 mg tablet)
- Increase the dose by ½ a tablet every night or two until you can fall asleep within 20 – 30 minutes
- The usual effective dose is 2.5 mg – 10 mg at bedtime

**Drugs and Foods to Avoid:**

Ask your doctor or pharmacist before using any other medication, including non-prescription medication (over-the-counter medication) and herbal products.

- Avoid alcohol use at the same time
- Avoid use of: St John's Wort, kava kava, gotu kola, valerian

**Tips:**

- If you are feeling sleepy or tired the morning after, **do not** drive, use tools, or operate machinery until your reactions have returned to normal
- If you experience a bitter, metallic aftertaste or dry mouth try chewing sugarless gum or sugar-free sweets

Please contact the Complex Chronic Diseases Program if you have further questions about your medications.