

Zolpidem

Medication Information Leaflet

What is this medication for?

Zolpidem is used for short-term treatment of insomnia (difficulty sleeping). It helps you fall asleep faster and sleep through the night.

How should I take/use this medication?

- Follow the instructions on your medication label and take this medication as prescribed by your doctor.
- This medication works faster if you take it on an empty stomach.
- This medication should be taken just before going to bed when you are ready to sleep.
- You should obtain this medication from the same doctor or clinic whenever possible.
- The controlled-release (CR) tablet must be swallowed whole; do not crush or chew it.

What should I do if I forget to take/use this medication?

If you are directed by your doctor to take the medication regularly and forget to take a dose, take it as soon as you remember, before going to sleep. Or you may wait until it is time to take your next dose, then go on as before. Do not take two doses to make up for the missed dose.

What precautions should I take?

Inform your healthcare professional if:

- You are allergic to this medication or any other ingredients in this medication
- You are pregnant, planning to become pregnant, or breastfeeding. If you are pregnant and/or breastfeeding, your doctor would have discussed the potential benefits and side-effects with you. If you have further questions or concerns, do consult your doctor.
- You are taking other medications including over-the-counter medications, supplements, traditional Chinese medicine and herbal remedies. Some of them may affect how this medication works or have serious interactions with this medication.
- You have or have ever had:
 - Other drug allergies or lactose intolerance (congenital galactosaemia, glucose malabsorption syndrome or lactase deficiency)
 - Other mental health conditions such as depression
 - Medical conditions such as:
 - Lung or liver disease
 - Drug or alcohol abuse
 - Myasthenia Gravis (an autoimmune condition that affects the nerves and muscles) or
 - Sleep apnea (temporary stopping of breathing during sleep)

This medication may be habit-forming when taken excessively or for a prolonged duration (especially at high doses). This may result in:

- Unintentional, regular use of the medication
- Dependence or over-reliance on the medication
- Decreased effectiveness of the medication

This can be prevented by taking the medication:

- On a short-term basis (2 - 4 weeks)
- At the lowest effective dose
- Intermittently (for example, taking it once every 2 or 3 nights for relieving sleep difficulty)

If you have been taking the medication on a long-term basis or at high doses, do not stop taking it abruptly as it may lead to withdrawal symptoms such as increased sweating, increased heart rate, tremors, trouble sleeping, increased agitation, hallucinations, increased anxiety, nausea or vomiting, and in severe cases, medical emergencies such as fits.

If you wish to cut down, discuss with your doctor to come up with a discontinuation plan. It is often best to reduce the dose gradually over a few weeks.

What are some common side-effects of this medication?

The mentioned side effects generally affect up to 10% of patients.

- Nausea, vomiting or stomach discomfort
 - Take this medication with or after food
 - Take simple meals and avoid rich or spicy foods
- Dizziness (especially during a sudden change in posture)
 - Get up slowly from a sitting or lying down position
- Feeling tired or drowsy
 - Avoid driving or engaging in activities requiring concentration for at least 7 to 8 hours after taking the medication
- Feeling clumsy or unsteady
 - Speak to your doctor if it becomes bothersome
- Headache
 - Speak to your doctor if it becomes bothersome

Most of the side effects listed here will improve with time. Speak to your doctor if they continue, get worse or are affecting your daily life.

What are some rare but serious side-effects that I need to seek medical advice immediately?

The symptoms of a drug allergy include one or more of the following:

- Swollen face/eyes/lips/tongue
- Difficulty in breathing
- Itchy skin rashes over your whole body

Rarely this medication may cause:

- Memory loss (amnesia)
- Abnormal thinking or changes in behaviour
- Unusual excitement, irritability, agitation or over-talkativeness (disinhibition)
- Unusual sleep-related activities such as walking, eating or cooking
- Confusion
- Fast, slow or irregular heartbeat
- Problems with eyesight
- Fainting or falling

If you experience any of these side effects, you should stop your medication and inform your healthcare professional immediately.

Please also take note that not all possible side effects are listed above. If you have any concerns about your medication, please consult your doctor or pharmacist.

What food or medication should I avoid when I take this medication?

Avoid drinking alcohol while taking this medication as it can cause excessive drowsiness.

How should I store this medication?

Store in a cool and dry place, away from direct sunlight. Keep this medication away from children.

How should I throw away this medication safely?

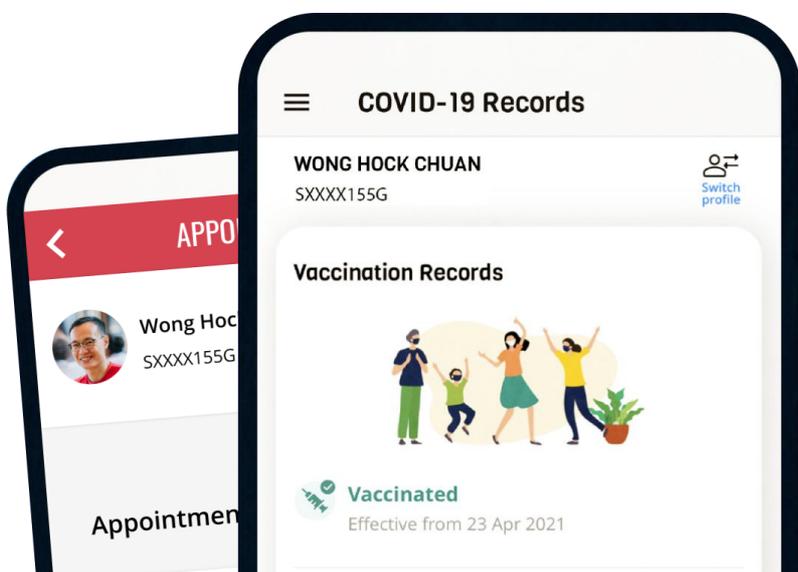
Pack this medication into a trash bag and seal it tightly before throwing it into the rubbish chute or bin.

Disclaimers

If you take more than the recommended dose, please seek medical advice immediately. The information provided on this page does not replace information from your healthcare professional. Please consult your healthcare professional for more information.

This article is jointly developed by members of the National Medication Information workgroup. The workgroup consists of cluster partners (National Healthcare Group, National University Health System and SingHealth), community pharmacies (Guardian, Unity and Watsons) and Pharmaceutical Society of Singapore. The content does not reflect drug availability and supply information in pharmacies and healthcare institutions. You are advised to check with the respective institutions for such information.

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