

Zolpidem tablets (Stilnoct)

Zolpidem will help you to sleep.

You should take it just before you go to bed.

If you still feel sleepy the next day, do not drive and do not use tools or machines.

About zolpidem

Type of medicine	Hypnotic (sleeping tablet)
Used for	Insomnia (sleeping problems)
Available as	Tablets

[Insomnia, or poor sleep](#), is fairly common but it does not usually last for long. If you have problems sleeping, it may mean that you have difficulty getting off to sleep, or you may wake up for long periods during the night, or you may wake up too early in the morning. 'Sleeping tablets' like zolpidem are considered to be a last resort, but they are sometimes prescribed for a short period of time to help with a particularly bad patch of insomnia.

Zolpidem belongs to a class of medicines commonly called [Z drugs](#). It works by acting on the way messages are sent in your brain, which help you to sleep. It reduces the time it takes for you to fall asleep and increases the length of time you spend sleeping.

Zolpidem will often work well in the short term, but it is not normally prescribed for more than 2-4 weeks. This is because your body gets used to it within a short period of time and after this it is unlikely to have the same effect. Your body may also become dependent on it when it is taken for longer periods of time than this.

Before taking zolpidem

Some medicines are not suitable for people with certain conditions, and sometimes a medicine may only be used if extra care is taken. For these reasons, before you start taking zolpidem it is important that your doctor knows:

- If you are pregnant, trying for a baby or breastfeeding.
- If you have any breathing problems, or if you have sleep apnoea, a problem where you stop breathing for short periods at night.
- If you have a condition called myasthenia gravis, or if you have any other condition causing muscle weakness, especially if this causes breathing difficulties.
- If you have ever had a drug or alcohol addiction.
- If you are feeling depressed, or if you have a mental health problem.
- If you have any problems with the way your liver works, or any problems with the way your kidneys work.
- If you have ever had an allergic reaction to a medicine.
- If you are taking or using any other medicines. This includes any medicines you are taking which are available to buy without a prescription, as well as herbal and complementary medicines.

How to take zolpidem

- Before you start the treatment, read the manufacturer's printed information leaflet from inside the pack. It will give you more information about zolpidem and will provide you with a full list of the side-effects which you may experience from taking it.
- It is usual to be prescribed one tablet (10 mg) to be taken just before going to bed. Do not take more than one dose during a single night. If you are over 65 years of age, your doctor may consider the 5 mg strength tablets more suitable for you.

- Take zolpidem exactly as your doctor tells you to. You could be advised to take a tablet on only two or three nights per week, rather than on every night.

Getting the most from your treatment

- Do not take zolpidem for longer than your doctor advises. It is only recommended for a maximum period of four weeks. This is because your body gets used to this medicine quickly, and after this time it is unlikely to have the same effect. Your body can also become dependent on it when it is taken for longer than this.
- The tablets will make you sleepy and you could still feel sleepy the next day. Do not drive and do not use tools or machines on the following day unless at least eight hours have passed since you took the zolpidem tablet. Take your zolpidem dose only once, just before bedtime. Do not take another dose during the same night.
- Do not drink alcohol while you are on zolpidem. It will increase the risk of side-effects such as sleepwalking and doing other things which you are unable to remember when you wake up.

Can zolpidem cause problems?

Along with their useful effects, most medicines can cause unwanted side-effects although not everyone experiences them. The table below contains some of the most common ones associated with zolpidem. You will find a full list in the manufacturer's information leaflet supplied with your medicine. The unwanted effects often improve as your body adjusts to the new medicine, but speak with your doctor or pharmacist if any of the following continue or become troublesome.

Common zolpidem side-effects (these affect fewer than 1 in 10 people)	What can I do if I experience this?
Feeling sleepy, dizzy, or tired	If you continue to feel sleepy on the morning after, do not drive and do not use tools or machines until your reactions have returned to normal
Headache, back pain	Drink plenty of water and ask your pharmacist to recommend a suitable painkiller. If the pain continues, let your doctor know
Stomach upset (such as diarrhoea, feeling sick (nausea), or abdominal discomfort)	Stick to simple meals - avoid rich or spicy meals
Hallucinations, feeling irritable, nightmares, poor memory, throat and chest infections	If any of these become troublesome, speak with your doctor

Some people taking zolpidem have done things while they are asleep that they do not remember when they wake up, such as sleepwalking, sleep-driving and having sex. If this happens to you, discuss it with your doctor.

If you experience any other symptoms which you think may be due to the tablets, speak with your doctor or pharmacist for further advice.

How to store zolpidem

- Keep all medicines out of the reach and sight of children.
- Store in a cool, dry place, away from direct heat and light.

Important information about all medicines

If you buy any medicines, check with a pharmacist that they are safe to take with your other medicines.

Never take more than the prescribed dose. If you suspect that you or someone else might have taken an overdose of this medicine go to the accident and emergency department of your local hospital at once. Take the container with you, even if it is empty.

If you are having an operation or dental treatment, tell the person carrying out the treatment which medicines you are taking.

This medicine is for you. Never give it to other people even if their condition appears to be the same as yours.

Do not keep out-of-date or unwanted medicines. Take them to your local pharmacy which will dispose of them for you.

If you have any questions about this medicine ask your pharmacist.

If you experience side effects, you can report them online through the [Yellow Card website](#).

Further reading

- [Manufacturer's PIL, Zolpidem Tartrate 5 mg and 10 mg Tablets](#); Zentiva, The electronic Medicines Compendium. Dated November 2022.
- [Medicines Complete BNF 87th Edition](#); British Medical Association and Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, London.

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