

Flurazepam (pron. flew-raz-e-pam)

What is flurazepam used for?

Flurazepam (also known as Dalmane[®]) is mainly used to help treat insomnia i.e. problems getting to sleep. It is one of a number of medicines called "hypnotics" and is sometimes called a "benzodiazepine". It is available as capsules.

What is the usual dose of flurazepam?

The usual dose of flurazepam is around 15-30mg at bedtime.

How should I take flurazepam?

Swallow the capsules with at least half a glass of water whilst sitting or standing. This is to make sure that they reach the stomach and do not stick in your throat.

When should I take flurazepam?

Take your flurazepam at bedtime, probably about half an hour before you go to bed. There is no problem about taking flurazepam with or after food.

What are the alternatives to flurazepam?

There are many other medicines, talking therapies and treatments for insomnia, and the causes of insomnia. See our "Handy charts" to help you compare the medicines, how they work and their side effects.

How long will flurazepam take to work?

Flurazepam usually starts to work in about an hour. The effect wears off in about 4-8 hours or so.

How long will I need to keep taking flurazepam for?

Please look one of the "Handy charts" for more help and advice on how long you might need to take it for. It is not a good idea to take it every night as the effect may start to wear off.

Is flurazepam addictive?

Flurazepam is not addictive as such, but you can get some symptoms if you stop it suddenly (see the next question). It is also true that it can be abused or misused by some people.

Can I stop taking flurazepam suddenly?

Some people get something called "rebound insomnia" when they stop a hypnotic. This means they find it even more difficult to get to sleep than before. It is best to take flurazepam only when you need it but if you have taken it every night for more than a few weeks, it might be best to reduce the dose slowly over a few days. You could discuss this fully with your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

What should I do if I forget to take a dose of flurazepam?

This is not really a problem.

Can I drink alcohol while I am taking flurazepam?

If you drink alcohol while taking flurazepam it may make you feel more sleepy, especially the next morning. This is particularly important if you need to drive or operate machinery and you must seek advice on this.

Will flurazepam affect my other medication?

Flurazepam has only a few interactions with other medicines.

- The effect of flurazepam can be decreased by caffeine (e.g. in tea, coffee, cola drinks, some energy drinks), theophylline or aminophylline (for asthma)
- If flurazepam is taken with alcohol, it will cause more sleepiness. You will also get more sleepiness if you take flurazepam with anything else that causes sleepiness e.g. some antihistamines, antidepressants, pain killers, antipsychotics, anticonvulsants and many other medicines
- You should have no problems with "The Contraceptive Pill" and flurazepam

Not all of these interactions happen in everyone. Some of these medicines can still be used together but you will need to follow your doctor's instructions carefully. There are many other possible drug interactions.

What sort of side-effects might occur if I am taking flurazepam?

The table below will show you some of the main side effects you might get from flurazepam.

Side effect	What happens	What to do about it
COMMON (more than about 1 in 10 people might get these)		
Hangover	You feel sleepy or sluggish the next morning.	Don't drive or use machinery. Discuss this with your doctor as there are some sleeping tablets that are less likely to do this.
Fatigue and sleepiness during the day	You feel tired, especially in the morning.	If you feel like this for more than a week after starting flurazepam, tell your doctor. It may be possible to reduce your dose.
Dizziness	Feeling light-headed and faint.	Don't stand up too quickly. Try and lie or sit down if you feel it coming on. Don't drive.
UNCOMMON (less than about 1 in 10 people might get these)		
Ataxia	Being unsteady on your feet.	Discuss with your doctor when you next see him or her.
RARE (less than about 1 in 100 people might get these)		
Aggression	Feeling excitable. You may be talkative, intrusive, unfriendly or disinhibited.	Discuss this with your doctor. He or she may want to adjust your medicine or dose.
Confusion	Your mind is all mixed up or confused.	Discuss with your doctor when you next see him or her. He or she may want to adjust your medicine or dose.
Postural hypotension	Low blood pressure – this can make you feel dizzy, particularly when you stand up.	Don't stand up too quickly. If you feel dizzy, don't drive.
Amnesia	Loss of short-term memory. Difficulty in remembering.	It is not dangerous. Discuss with your doctor if you are worried.
Rashes	Blotches seen on the skin.	Stop taking flurazepam and see your doctor now.
OTHER		
Rebound insomnia	More difficult to get to sleep if you stop taking flurazepam.	If you feel like this for more than a week after stopping flurazepam, tell your doctor.

Do not be worried by this list of side effects. Some people get no side effects at all and others may get some effects that are not listed in this table. If you think you might have a side effect to your medicine, you should ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist. If you want to know more, go to our website for links to other websites with more information.

Will I need a blood test if I am taking flurazepam?

You should not need a blood test while you are taking flurazepam.

Can I drive or cycle while I am taking flurazepam?

You may feel a bit sleepy the next morning after taking flurazepam. It may slow down your reaction times. Until this wears off, or you know how flurazepam affects you, do not drive or operate machinery.

The small print: This leaflet is to help you understand about your medicine. You should also read the manufacturer's Patient Information Leaflet (PIL). You may find lots more on the internet but beware as internet-based information is not always accurate. Do not share medicines with anyone else. Go to our website for fuller answers to these and many other questions e.g. driving, women's health, how it works, doses and interactions, and about the conditions. The "Handy charts" will help you compare the main medicines for each condition, how they work and their side effects.