

Zaleplon (pron. zal-epp-Lon)

What is zaleplon used for?

Zaleplon (also known by its trade name Sonata[®]) is usually 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 "Z hypnotic" for obvious reasons. It is available as capsules.

What is the usual dose of zaleplon?

The usual dose of zaleplon is around 10mg at night.

How should I take zaleplon?

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 quickly and do not stick in your throat. It obviously can't start working until it reaches your stomach.

When should I take zaleplon?

Take your zaleplon at bedtime. There is no problem about taking zaleplon with or after food. Some people find it useful to take a dose if they wake in the night and can't get back to sleep. You shouldn't do this more than 2-4 hours before you would normally get up.

What are the alternatives to zaleplon?

There are many other medicines (e.g. the benzodiazepines), 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 zaleplon take to work?

Zaleplon usually starts to work in about 15-20 minutes. The effect wears off in about 2-4 hours or so.

How long will I need to keep taking zaleplon 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 zaleplon addictive?

Zaleplon is not addictive as such.

Can I stop taking zaleplon 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 zaleplon 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 zaleplon?

This is not really a problem.

Can I drink alcohol while I am taking zaleplon?

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

Will zaleplon affect my other medication?

Zaleplon has only a few interactions with other medicines:

- Zaleplon can cause sleepiness (a bit obvious, as that's the reason people take them!) and so you should be careful if taking it with alcohol or another medicine that causes sleepiness e.g. benzodiazepines (e.g. diazepam, lorazepam, temazepam), some antidepressants etc
- The effects of zaleplon can be increased by ketoconazole, erythromycin or cimetidine
- The effects of zaleplon can be decreased by carbamazepine or phenobarbital
- You should have no problems with "The Contraceptive Pill" and zaleplon

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 zaleplon?

The table below will show you some of the main side effects you might get from zaleplon. These are side effects from taking higher doses of zaleplon, but if you just take it at night then you will probably get very few side effects.

Side effect	What happens	What to do about it
LESS COMMON (<i>less than about 1 in 10 people might get these</i>)		
Fatigue	You feel tired all the time.	If you feel like this for more than a week after starting zaleplon, tell your doctor. It may be possible to adjust your dose.
Confusion	Your mind is all mixed up, your memory is poor	Tell your doctor. It may be possible to alter your dose or try something else.
Parasthesia	Tingling in your fingers and toes	Tell your doctor. It may be possible to alter your dose or try something else.
Painful menstruation	Period pains	Tell your doctor. It may be possible to alter your dose or try something else.
UNCOMMON (<i>less than about 1 in 100 people might get these</i>)		
Hallucinations	You see or hear things that are not there.	Tell your doctor. It may be possible to alter lower your dose or change your hypnotic
Nightmares	Unpleasant dreams	This probably means your dose is too high. Talk to your doctor about this.
OTHER		
Rebound insomnia	More difficult to get to sleep if you stop taking zaleplon.	If you feel like this for more than a week after stopping zaleplon, tell your doctor.

There are many other side effects that might occur. Some are common, some less common, some rare, and some so rare we don't really know if the medicine caused it. If you develop any unusual symptoms ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist about them next time you meet. 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 zaleplon?

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

Can I drive while I am taking zaleplon?

You may feel a bit sleepy the next morning when taking zaleplon. You should be careful as it may slow down your reaction times. Until this wears off, or you know how zaleplon affects you, do not drive or operate machinery.

Prepared for you by Choice and Medication

This leaflet is to help you understand about your medicine. It is not a manufacturer's Patient Information Leaflet. You may find lots more on the internet but beware as internet-based information is not always accurate. The "Handy charts" will help you compare the main medicines for each condition, how they work and their side effects.