

Eszopiclone

Lunesta • a medicine for insomnia

Can help you fall asleep and stay asleep. Better sleep should also mean a safer, more functional day.

From Jeffrey Panko, PMHNP-BC's education collection ·

Draft for review · Clinical content has not been revalidated for this website.

ADULT INSOMNIA

TABLETS: 1, 2, 3 mg • SCHEDULE IV

PAM means positive allosteric modulator: it strengthens GABA's calming signal, rather than replacing GABA.

What it is used for

Treats adult insomnia: trouble falling asleep, staying asleep, or both.

It may be used when insomnia occurs with depression or anxiety, but it does not replace treatment for those conditions.

How it works

It strengthens the effect of GABA, a brain chemical that slows activity. This can help sleep, but also affect memory and coordination.

Sleep-focused therapy called CBT-I helps change habits and patterns that keep insomnia going. Ask about using it alongside your treatment.

What to expect over time

FIRST NIGHT

It can start helping that night. Take it only when you are ready to get into bed.

WITHIN 7–10 DAYS

Call if sleep is worse or not improving. Another condition may need attention.

ONGOING

Review sleep, daytime alertness and side effects. Do not raise the dose yourself.

Taking your medication

Follow your own prescription. Take one dose right before bed only when you have at least 7–8 hours to sleep. Never take another dose that night.

Do not take it with or right after a meal, especially a heavy, high-fat meal; it may work more slowly.

Do not take it if you drank alcohol that evening. Check all other sleep or sedating medicines with your prescriber first.

When to get help

Stop and call right away: sleepwalking, sleep-driving, eating or other activities while not fully awake, especially if you cannot remember them. This can happen even after one dose.

Call 911: trouble breathing, tongue/throat swelling, inability to wake up, collapse or immediate self-harm danger.

Too much medicine? Call Poison Control at 1-800-222-1222 now, even if you feel okay.

Early side effects

Bitter or metallic taste, dry mouth, dizziness, headache or drowsiness can occur. Tell your team if these bother you; do not change the dose on your own.

Other effects to discuss

Report confusion, memory gaps, falls, hallucinations, unusual aggression, worsening depression or suicidal thoughts promptly. Ask someone you trust to tell you about unusual nighttime behavior.

What to keep track of

You may be impaired even when you feel awake. With the 3 mg dose, do not drive or do tasks needing full alertness the next day. At any dose, do not drive if sleepy or slowed; ask your team about safe timing.

Before you start

Tell your team about sleepwalking or similar behavior with Lunesta, Ambien or Sonata; allergies; breathing or liver problems; falls; depression; substance-use concerns; pregnancy or breastfeeding. Bring all medicines, supplements and nonprescription products.

Medicines & interactions

Alcohol

Do not combine. Alcohol adds impairment and other serious risks.

Opioids and sedatives

Pain medicines, benzodiazepines, gabapentin/pregabalin, allergy pills and other sleep aids may add dangerous sleepiness or breathing problems. Check before combining.

Medicines that change drug levels

Some antifungals, antibiotics, antivirals and seizure medicines change its effects. Have your pharmacist review each new medicine.

Everyday tips

Keep a steady wake-up time and a simple sleep diary.

Ask about CBT-I, not just another sleeping pill.

Limit late caffeine; make the bedroom dark and quiet.

Keep a clear, well-lit path if you must get up.

Your questions, answered

What if I miss the bedtime dose?

Skip it if you no longer have a full 7–8 hours for sleep. Do not take an extra or middle-of-night dose, and never double up.

Will I become dependent?

Dependence can develop with regular use. This is not the same as addiction. Discuss a stopping plan; sudden changes may bring rebound insomnia or withdrawal.

Can I stop immediately?

For routine stopping, ask about a gradual plan. If you have unusual activities while not fully awake, stop immediately and call your prescriber; do not keep taking it to taper.

What about pregnancy or breastfeeding?

Contact your prescriber to discuss benefits, risks and alternatives. Available information is limited; make a plan together.

Storage & safety

Keep securely in its original container at room temperature, away from moisture, children and pets. Never share. Ask a pharmacy about a take-back program for unused tablets.

About this information

For general information only; not a substitute for individualized medical advice. This sheet does not cover every risk or interaction. Ask your prescriber or pharmacist before changing how you take this medication.

Sources

1. <https://dailymed.nlm.nih.gov/dailymed/drugInfo.cfm?setid=3821f4b7-a3c8-4920-ba80-18aa96532c09>
 2. <https://www.fda.gov/safety/medical-product-safety-information/certain-prescription-insomnia-medicines-new-boxed-warning-due-risk-serious-injuries-caused>
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Educational inclusion does not mean this medication or its indications are treated at this practice. Review the guide for your exact product with your prescriber or pharmacist.

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