

Ziprasidone

Geodon

A medicine for psychosis or bipolar symptoms. Taking it with enough food is part of the treatment.

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

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

TAKE EACH DOSE WITH A MEAL

CHECK HEART-RHYTHM INTERACTIONS

Each capsule dose needs a meal of at least 500 calories. A small snack is not enough for reliable absorption.

What it is used for

For adults with schizophrenia or bipolar I manic/mixed episodes. Bipolar maintenance treatment also needs lithium or valproate.

A short-acting injection treats schizophrenia-related agitation in a clinical setting. It is not a long-acting maintenance injection.

How it works

It changes dopamine and serotonin signaling involved in thinking, perception and mood.

The small diagram explains part of the medicine's action. It does not predict your response or show every possible side effect.

What to expect over time

EARLY DAYS

Sleep, agitation or energy may change before other symptoms.

OVER SEVERAL WEEKS

Thinking and mood may improve gradually. Keep your follow-up visits.

EACH DOSE MATTERS

Consistent meals help you absorb a consistent amount of medicine.

Taking your medication

Take capsules as prescribed, usually twice daily. Have at least a 500-calorie meal with each dose. Swallow the capsule whole; do not open, crush or chew it.

If eating that much is difficult, tell your team. Ask for a practical meal plan or another medicine; do not take extra capsules to make up for a small meal.

Missed a dose? Take it with food when remembered unless it is nearly time for the next one. Never double. After several missed doses, ask your team how to restart.

When to get help

Emergency: fainting, a racing/irregular heartbeat with dizziness, seizure, trouble breathing, stroke signs or inability to stay safe.

Emergency: fever with stiff muscles/confusion; severe agitation with sweating, diarrhea or shaking; or a painful erection lasting four hours.

Urgent assessment: a new rash, especially with fever, facial swelling, blisters or mouth sores. Do not take another dose until urgently advised. Report new uncontrolled movements promptly.

Early side effects

Sleepiness, dizziness, nausea, constipation, dry mouth or restlessness may occur. Stand slowly; avoid driving until you know the effects. An unbearable need to move needs a call to your team, not just waiting it out.

Other effects to discuss

Weight, blood sugar and cholesterol can rise. Report missed periods, breast discharge, sexual problems or involuntary movements. Lower average weight gain does not mean no metabolic risk.

What to keep track of

Expect weight, BP, blood-sugar, cholesterol and movement checks; ECG and potassium/magnesium tests depend on your risks. Report fainting, palpitations, severe diarrhea/vomiting, extreme thirst or frequent urination promptly.

Before you start

Mention heart disease, fainting, family long QT, a slow pulse, seizures, diabetes, low blood counts, liver/kidney problems, swallowing trouble, pregnancy or nursing. This is not approved for dementia-related psychosis or for children in the US.

Medicines & interactions

Medicines that affect heart rhythm

Some combinations must not be used. Check all psychiatric, heart, antibiotic and anti-nausea medicines with your pharmacist.

MAOIs, linezolid or IV methylene blue

These need specific separation and medical planning. Do not start them without the treating team checking your ziprasidone.

Antidepressants, pain medicines and supplements

Some increase serotonin-syndrome risk; others change drug levels. Include St. John's wort and nonprescription products in your list.

Alcohol, sedatives and blood-pressure medicines

Alcohol and sedatives worsen impairment; some medicines increase dizziness or falls. Avoid alcohol and check before adding a remedy.

Everyday tips

Tie doses to two dependable meals. A pharmacist or dietitian can help if meal size, appetite or food access is a problem.

Keep fluids appropriate for your health, avoid overheating and get help for ongoing vomiting or diarrhea.

Track sleep, symptoms and side effects so follow-up can focus on what is actually changing.

Plan stopping or switching with your prescriber. Sudden stopping can disrupt sleep, cause nausea and bring symptoms back.

Your questions, answered

Can I take it with just coffee?

No. Each capsule dose needs a meal of at least 500 calories. Ask for help making the schedule work for you.

Does lower weight-gain risk mean no lab tests?

No. Blood sugar and cholesterol can still change, sometimes without obvious symptoms.

What if I become pregnant?

Contact your team promptly to discuss benefits, risks and alternatives. Do not abruptly stop on your own; untreated symptoms also carry risks.

Can I breastfeed?

The medicine has been found in milk. Discuss feeding and treatment together; watch for unusual sleepiness, poor feeding or abnormal infant movements.

Storage & safety

Store at room temperature away from excess heat/moisture, children and pets. Never share. For an extra dose or suspected overdose, contact Poison Control in the US at 1-800-222-1222; call 911 for severe symptoms.

A final reminder

Follow your own prescription and complete medication guide.

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=8326928a-2cb6-4f7f-9712-03a425a14c37>
 2. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/19026256/>
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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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