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Ambien

Pronunciation: *am-bee-uhn*

Generic name: [zolpidem](#)

Brand names: Ambien, [Ambien CR](#)

Drug class: [Miscellaneous anxiolytics, sedatives and hypnotics](#)

Medically reviewed by [Melisa Puckey, BPharm](#). Last updated on Feb 29, 2024.

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What is Ambien?

Ambien is a sedative, also called a hypnotic. Ambien (zolpidem) affects chemicals in the brain that may be unbalanced in people with sleep problems (insomnia).

Ambien is used to treat [insomnia](#). The immediate-release tablet is used to help you fall asleep when you first go to bed. The extended-release form, Ambien CR, which has a first layer that dissolves quickly to help you fall asleep, and a second layer that dissolves slowly to help you stay asleep.

Your doctor will determine which form of Ambien is best for you.

Warnings

Ambien may cause a severe allergic reaction. Stop taking this medicine and get emergency medical help if you have any of these **signs of an allergic reaction:** [hives](#); difficulty breathing; swelling of your face, lips, tongue, or throat.

Do not share Ambien with another person, even if they have the same symptoms you have. The recommended doses of zolpidem are not the same in men and women, and this drug is not approved for use in children. Misuse of this medication can result in dangerous side effects.

Ambien may impair your thinking or reactions. You may still feel sleepy the morning after taking this medicine, especially if you take the extended-release tablet, or if you are a woman. Wait at least 4 hours or until you are fully awake before you do anything that requires you to be awake and alert.

Never take Ambien in larger amounts or for longer than prescribed.

Do not take zolpidem if you have consumed alcohol during the day or just before bed.

Before taking this medicine

Some people using Ambien have engaged in activity such as driving, eating, walking, making phone calls, or having sex

and later having no memory of the activity. If this happens to you, stop taking this medicine and talk with your doctor about another treatment for your sleep disorder.

You should not use Ambien if you are allergic to zolpidem. The tablets may contain lactose. Use caution if you are sensitive to lactose.

Ambien is not approved for use by anyone younger than 18 years old.

To make sure this medicine is safe for you, tell your doctor if you have ever had:

- [depression](#), mental illness, or suicidal thoughts;
- drug or alcohol addiction;
- lung disease or breathing problems;
- [sleep apnea](#) (breathing stops during sleep); or
- liver or kidney disease.

Taking Ambien in the last 3 months of pregnancy may cause drowsiness or breathing problems in your newborn.

It may not be safe to breast-feed while using this medicine. Ask your doctor about any risk.

 [Ambien pregnancy and breastfeeding warnings](#) (more detail)

How should I take Ambien?

Take Ambien exactly as prescribed by your doctor. Follow all directions on your prescription label. Never take this medicine in larger amounts, or for longer than prescribed.

The recommended doses of zolpidem are not the same in men and women, and this drug is not approved for use in children.

Read all patient information, medication guides, and instruction sheets provided to you. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you have any questions.

Zolpidem may be habit-forming. **Misuse can cause addiction, overdose, or death.** Selling or giving away this medicine is against the law.

Do not share this medication with another person, even if they have the same symptoms you have. The recommended doses of Ambien are not the same in men and women, and this drug is not approved for use in children. Misuse of this medication can result in dangerous side effects.

Never take this medicine if you do not have a full 7 to 8 hours to sleep before being active again.

Ambien is for short-term use only. Tell your doctor if your insomnia symptoms do not improve, or if they get worse after using this medication for 7 to 10 nights in a row. Do not take this medicine for longer than 4 or 5 weeks without your doctor's advice.

Do not stop using Ambien suddenly after long-term use, or you could have unpleasant withdrawal symptoms. Ask your doctor how to avoid withdrawal symptoms when you stop using the medicine.

Insomnia symptoms may also return after you stop taking Ambien, and may be even worse than before. Call your doctor if you still have worsened insomnia for the first few nights after you stop taking this medicine.

Do not crush, chew, or break an Ambien CR tablet. Swallow the pill whole.

Store at room temperature away from moisture and heat. Do not freeze.

 [Detailed Ambien dosage information](#)

What happens if I miss a dose?

Since Ambien is taken only at bedtime if needed, you are not likely to miss a dose.

What happens if I overdose?

Seek emergency medical attention or call the Poison Help line at 1-800-222-1222. **An overdose of zolpidem can be fatal, especially when it is taken together with other medications that can cause drowsiness.**

Overdose symptoms may include sleepiness, confusion, shallow breathing, feeling light-headed, fainting, or coma.

What to avoid

Avoid taking Ambien during travel, such as to sleep on an airplane. You may be awakened before the effects of the medicine have worn off. Amnesia (forgetfulness) is more common if you do not get a full 7 to 8 hours of sleep after taking Ambien.

Avoid driving or hazardous activity until you know how zolpidem will affect you. **You may still feel sleepy the morning after taking Ambien**, and your reactions could be impaired. Wait until you are fully awake before you drive, operate machinery, pilot an airplane, or do anything that requires you to be awake and alert.

Do not take this medicine if you have consumed alcohol during the day or just before bed.

Ambien side effects

Zolpidem may cause a severe allergic reaction. Stop taking Ambien and get emergency medical help if you have **signs of an allergic reaction**: hives; difficulty breathing; swelling of your face, lips, tongue, or throat.

Report any new or worsening symptoms to your doctor, such as: depression, [anxiety](#), aggression, [agitation](#), confusion, unusual thoughts, hallucinations, memory problems, changes in personality, risk-taking behavior, decreased inhibitions, no fear of danger, or thoughts of suicide or hurting yourself.

Stop using this medicine and call your doctor at once if you have:

- chest pain, fast or [irregular heartbeat](#), feeling short of breath;
- trouble breathing or swallowing; or
- feeling like you might pass out.

The sedative effect of Ambien may be stronger in older adults.

[Dizziness](#) or severe drowsiness can cause falls, accidents, or severe injuries.

Common Ambien side effects may include:

- daytime drowsiness, dizziness, weakness, feeling "drugged" or light-headed;
- tired feeling, loss of coordination;
- stuffy nose, dry mouth, nose or throat irritation;
- [nausea](#), [constipation](#), [diarrhea](#), [upset stomach](#); or
- [headache](#), muscle pain.

This is not a complete list of side effects and others may occur. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

 [Ambien side effects](#) (more detail)

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What other drugs will affect Ambien?

Using Ambien with other drugs that make you drowsy can worsen this effect. Ask your doctor before using opioid medication, a sleeping pill, a muscle relaxer, or medicine for anxiety or [seizures](#).

Many drugs can interact with zolpidem, making it less effective or increasing side effects. This includes prescription and over-the-counter medicines, [vitamins](#), and [herbal products](#). Not all possible interactions are listed here. Tell your doctor about all your current medicines and any medicine you start or stop using.

 [Ambien drug interactions](#) (more detail)

Does Ambien interact with my other drugs?

Enter medications to view a detailed interaction report using our [Drug Interaction Checker](#).

Ambien

+

Enter a drug name

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Other brands

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Further information

Remember, keep this and all other medicines out of the reach of children, never share your medicines with others, and use Ambien only for the indication prescribed.

Always consult your healthcare provider to ensure the information displayed on this page applies to your personal circumstances.

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DRUG STATUS

Availability	
Rx	Prescription only
Pregnancy & Lactation	
	Risk data available
CSA Schedule*	
4	Some potential for abuse
Approval History	
10+ years	FDA approved 1992

User Reviews & Ratings

7.0 / 10

[558 Reviews](#)

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