

## **Zolpidem: risk of drowsiness and reduced driving ability**

May 2014

### **Key messages**

- Zolpidem is an effective treatment for sleeping problems (insomnia)
- You may feel drowsy the day after taking zolpidem. If you drive or use machinery too soon after taking zolpidem you may risk having an accident
- Take zolpidem at bedtime and do not take it again the same night. Do not take more than one dose of zolpidem in 24 hours
- Wait at least 8 hours after taking zolpidem before driving, operating machinery, or working at heights
- Do not drive, operate machinery, or work at heights if you feel drowsy after taking zolpidem



Zolpidem is sold under the brand names Edluar and Stilnoct.

### **What is the issue?**

Zolpidem is an effective medicine to help you sleep at night but it may reduce your ability to drive and use machinery the following day. If you drive or use machinery too soon after taking zolpidem you may risk having an accident. On the day after taking zolpidem you may experience the following:

- You may feel drowsy, sleepy, dizzy, confused, or less alert
- You may have blurred or double vision
- It may take you longer than normal to make decisions

### **What should I do if I need to take zolpidem?**

Take zolpidem at bedtime and at least 8 hours before you intend to drive or do anything that requires alertness (eg, operating machinery, working at heights). Do not take zolpidem again the same night. Do not drive, operate machinery, or work at heights if you feel drowsy after taking zolpidem. Do not take zolpidem with alcohol, or when you have been drinking alcohol. Drinking alcohol will make you more likely to feel drowsy the next day.

The maximum dose of zolpidem is 10 milligrams. In some circumstances, your doctor may prescribe you a lower dose (eg, if you are elderly or have liver problems).

### *Other medicines and zolpidem*

Do not take zolpidem with any of the following (unless your doctor has told you to do so):

- antidepressants
- ciprofloxacin (an antibiotic).

If you take zolpidem around the same time as certain other medicines you are more likely to feel drowsy and have trouble driving the next day. Talk to your doctor or pharmacist before taking zolpidem if you are taking medicines for any of the following:

- mental health problems
- sleep problems
- anxiety
- moderate to severe pain
- epilepsy
- hay fever, rashes, or other allergies

If you need surgery, tell your doctor or dentist that you are taking zolpidem before you are given any anaesthetics.

**Remember:** Do not drive, operate machinery or work at heights if you feel drowsy after taking zolpidem

### **Reporting side effects**

Please report any suspected side effects to any medicine or vaccine to the Yellow Card Scheme via the website ([www.mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard](http://www.mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard)) or by calling the free phone line (0800 731 6789). By reporting side effects you can help provide more information on the safety of medicines.