

Drugs for Hypnotic



葵涌醫院
KWAI CHUNG
HOSPITAL



醫院管理局
HOSPITAL
AUTHORITY

Publishing : Kwai Chung Hospital
Address : 3-15, Kwai Chung Hospital Road,
New Territories
Phone : 2959-8111
Fax : 2745-7610
Website : www.ha.org.hk/kch

This document has been translated into other languages.
In case of any discrepancy or inconsistency, the English version shall prevail.

What are Hypnotics?

Hypnotics are a class of drugs designed to assist with sleep. They're often used to treat a variety of sleep disorders, most commonly insomnia. These medications work by increasing the chances of initiating sleep, maintaining sleep, or improving the quality of sleep. The exact mechanism of action varies depending on the type of hypnotic drug.

Three types of Hypnotics

1. Antihistamine

2. Z-Drugs

3. Benzodiazepines

➤ Antihistamine

Antihistamines are commonly known as anti-allergy drugs, and are indicated for alleviating allergic symptoms, such as runny nose and itching skin. Antihistamines can induce sedative effects by blocking a brain chemical called histamine which promotes wakefulness.

➤ Z-Drugs

Z-drugs are a newer class of hypnotics. They can help you fall asleep more quickly and stop you waking up during the night. Z-drugs are typically used for short-term treatment of insomnia.

➤ Benzodiazepines

Benzodiazepines work by enhancing the effect of GABA, slowing down brain activity and inducing a calming effect. They are used for a variety of conditions, including anxiety and sleep disorders. However, they are generally not recommended for long-term use due to the risk of dependency.

What are the side effects?

The side effects of hypnotics can vary depending on the type of hypnotics:

Hypnotics	Common side effects	Remarks
Antihistamine <i>Chlorpheniramine, Hydroxyzine, Promethazine</i>	Dry mouth, constipation, blurred vision, dizziness, headache	Antihistamines usually take 20 minutes to 1 hour to work.
Z-Drugs <i>Zopiclone, Zolpidem</i>	Nausea, dyspepsia, dizziness, headache, dry mouth, next-day somnolence, metallic taste in the mouth	Z-drugs usually take around an hour to work. Some people may experience sleepwalking and this is more likely to happen if you take z-drugs with alcohol or other medicines for mental health problems.
Benzodiazepines <i>Alprazolam, Bromazepam, Clonazepam, Diazepam, Lorazepam</i>	Light-headedness, confusion, unsteadiness, dizziness, slurred speech, muscle weakness	<div><div>➤ Benzodiazepines have the potential to cause addiction. To minimize the likelihood of addiction, it is advisable to consume the smallest effective dose and limit the duration of use to a brief period.</div><div>➤ The probability of addiction increases if you require a larger dose over an extended period, or if you have a history of alcohol or drug issues.</div></div>

Can I stop taking my Hypnotics?

Stopping hypnotics should always be done under the guidance of a healthcare provider. Abrupt discontinuation can lead to withdrawal symptoms. It is less likely to have these symptoms if you have been taking hypnotics for less than a month.

How long do I need to take my Hypnotics?

The duration of hypnotic treatment varies based on the individual patient and the specific sleep disorder. In many cases, these medications are used for short-term treatment (a few weeks). Long-term use is generally avoided due to the risk of dependency, particularly with benzodiazepines. Your healthcare provider will determine the appropriate duration of treatment.

DO

1. Strictly follow the doctor's instructions.
2. Pay attention to the drug name, dosage and frequency, etc. before taking your medication.
3. Read the prescription label carefully.
4. Pay attention to the dosage, indication, contraindication and side effects.
5. Understand the method of administration.
6. Store your medication properly.
7. Complete the prescribed course unless otherwise directed.
8. If you have any questions, talk to your family and ask your health care professionals.

DON'T

1. Change the dosage of your medication on your own.
2. Stop taking your medication except on your doctor's advice.
3. Drink alcohol with your medication.
4. Put your medication in other bottle.
5. Take other medication unless directed by your doctor.
6. Lie to your doctors about your compliance.