

# ConsumerRx<sup>®</sup>

Sleep Medications – **zolpidem** (Ambien<sup>®</sup>), Ambien CR<sup>®</sup>, Lunesta<sup>®</sup>, Rozerem<sup>™</sup> and Sonata<sup>®</sup>

## **What are zolpidem (Ambien<sup>®</sup>), Ambien<sup>®</sup> CR, Lunesta<sup>®</sup>, Rozerem<sup>™</sup> and Sonata<sup>®</sup>?**

They are medications used to treat patients that have difficulty falling asleep, wake up too early or have sleep that does not feel refreshing.

## **Why are there limits to the amount that is covered?**

According to the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), sleep medications should in most cases be used only for 1 or 2 days and generally no longer than 1 or 2 weeks. The safety of taking these medications nightly for more than 2 weeks has not been established in studies or by the FDA. Because of these concerns, coverage is limited to short-term use.

These products are generally not available through a mail order benefit, because of the short term use.

## **Are there safety concerns with these sleep medications?**

Yes. The FDA has stated that severe allergic reactions can occur. Additionally there have been reports of people being asleep while driving, making phone calls and preparing and eating food.

## **Can you become physically dependent on these sleep medications?**

Yes, the FDA has warnings regarding their risk of abuse and dependency for Ambien, Ambien CR, Lunesta and Sonata. There is no known risk of dependence with Rozerem at this time.

## **What if I can't sleep after I run out of medication?**

Patients who need medication to help them sleep for more than 2 weeks should talk to their doctor to find out if there is an underlying cause for the sleep difficulty.

## **What can I do to sleep better without medication?**

- Maintain a consistent sleep schedule. Go to bed and get up at the same time.
- Create a comfortable environment, noise and light free.
- Avoid alcohol and caffeine and cut back or stop tobacco use. Nicotine is a stimulant.
- Don't eat or drink excessively close to bedtime.
- Exercise regularly and at least 3 hours before bedtime.
- Create a relaxing bedtime routine.

## **THE BOTTOM LINE**

**Talk to your doctor about the cause of your sleep difficulty for long term good health and sleep.**

**Zolpidem** (Ambien<sup>®</sup>), Ambien<sup>®</sup> CR, Lunesta<sup>®</sup>, Rozerem<sup>®</sup> and Sonata<sup>®</sup> can be helpful for short-term relief of sleep difficulty but dependency and other long-term possible effects should be avoided.

*Note: Since many medication options are available, our physicians and pharmacists developed this to provide you with information about the available alternatives, as well as potential advantages and/or lack of advantages of the various products. This medication summary was developed based upon an evaluation of information from the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), scientific studies, and input from practicing doctors.*



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