Sedative Hypnotic Information Sheet (Adult)

Sedative hypnotics are powerful medications that can be used for many different reasons. If you use these medications, you may have trouble falling asleep or staying asleep. They may not be right for all patients, and may be dangerous if they are used incorrectly. You are being given this sheet to help you understand the risks of using a sedative hypnotic medication. Your doctor will keep in mind these risks and benefits, and work with you to decide whether your medication needs to be adjusted or stopped.

Dose Levels: Your dose may change depending on what medication you are using and what you are using it for. Here are some of the more common sedative hypnotics and their doses. Every person is different and may require a different dose. Some doses are different depending on if you are male or female. You may not need to take these medications every day. Some people take them only when they need them.

- Ambien® (zolpidem)
  - 5 mg to 12.5 mg immediately before bedtime

- Lunesta® (eszopiclone)
  - 1 mg to 3 mg immediately before bedtime

- Sonata® (zaleplon)
  - 5 mg to 10 mg immediately before bedtime

Possible Early Side Effects (with early and short-term use; may continue with long-term use)
- Headache
- Upset stomach
- Dizziness
- Sleepiness and tiredness
- Changes in the way things taste
- Increased risks for infections, like a cold
- Trouble with your memory

Possible Late Side Effects (after taking the medication regularly for two weeks; hard to predict and may happen suddenly)
- Tolerance
  - Needing more of the medication for the same relief
- Changes in the way you think or act
  - May cause sadness
  - May cause suicidal thoughts
- Dependence
  - May have withdrawal symptoms if you suddenly stop taking the medication
  - Withdrawal symptoms can include: seizure, headache, shakiness, muscle aches and pains, hallucinations (seeing things that are not actually there), trouble sleeping, upset stomach, vomiting, and confusion
How to Store Medication

- **NOT** in your bathroom medicine cabinet
- **NOT** above your stove
- **NOT** in a hot car
- Away from heat, light, and moisture
- Away from children
- Away from pets
- Recommend a safe or other locked box or locked drawer

How to Dispose of Leftover Medication

- Talk to your pharmacist
- Contact your local police station
- Look for national drug take-back days

Possible issues with Ongoing Sedative Hypnotic Use

**Misuse** - Taking more of the medication to try to fall asleep

**Abuse** - Taking the medication for any reason other than the original diagnosis

**Addiction** – Continuing to look for and use these medications even though it may result in bad legal, social, physical, or mental health outcomes

**Diversion** - Giving away or selling your medication to anyone else - *This is against the law.*

Special Warning about Sedative Hypnotics

- Avoid consuming alcohol at the same time as taking these medications
- Go straight to bed after taking these medications
- These medications may cause you to do things you don’t remember doing like:
  - Sleep walking
  - Sleep driving
  - Sleep cooking

Sleep hygiene: Things you can do to sleep better

- Have a quiet, comfortable bedroom
  - Turn off the TV, radio, phone, and bright lights
  - If you are a “clock watcher” at night, hide the clock
- Have a comfortable bedtime routine
  - A warm bath or shower, meditation, or quiet time
- Limit caffeine use in the afternoons and into the evening; it can bother sleep
- Cigarettes, alcohol, and some over-the-counter medications can delay sleep
- Exercising regularly may help you sleep better, but avoid exercising within three hours of sleep