

Remember!

Sleeping pills should be used for short-term sleeping problems when the cause of the problem is understood.

How can I improve my sleep without pills?

- Make sure you are comfortable in bed
- Think about whether the level of light suits you
- Make sure you are not going to be disturbed by noise.
- Go to bed only when you are feeling tired.
- Don't read or watch television in bed because these activities will only encourage you to stay awake.
- Avoid coffee, tea, and other caffeine-containing drinks.
- Get enough exercise during the day; fit people sleep better.
- Don't eat large meal too late in the day. Eating gives you energy boost, which may keep you awake.
- Try to relax before going to bed.

ATTENTION

All information on this pamphlet is for patients' educational purposes only. Please obtain appropriate medical advice from your doctor or pharmacist if you have any questions regarding your conditions or medications.

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SLEEPING PILLS

PHARMACEUTICAL SERVICES DIVISION
MINISTRY OF HEALTH MALAYSIA

Definition:

Sleeping pills are medicines that can induce sleep, aid in staying asleep, and re-establish the habit of sleeping.

Why they are used?

Sleeplessness can be caused by psychological problems including anxiety or depression, or by pain and discomfort arising physical disorder.

Every effort should be made to treat the underlying problems and develop successful sleeping habits more naturally before resorting to sleeping pills.

Sleeping pills are prescribed only when these naturally self-help remedies have failed, and when insufficient sleep is beginning to affect your general health.

How do sleeping pills work?

Most sleeping pills promote sleep by depressing brain functions, leading to reduced brain activities, which allow you to fall asleep more easily.

Risks and special precautions

Sleeping pills become less effective after first few nights and there may be a temptation to increase the dose.

Sleeping pills may impair judgement and increase reaction time, and so affect ability to drive or operate machinery.

Most sleeping pills can produce dependence and tolerance when taken regularly for more than a few weeks and may lead to difficulty in withdrawing them.

When sleeping pills are suddenly withdrawn, anxiety, convulsion, and hallucination may sometimes occasionally occur.

They should be used with caution in:

- People who have respiratory disease
- Muscle weakness
- People who have a history of drug or alcohol abuse

You should not use sleeping pills if you are pregnant, unless the doctor decides that the possible benefits to you outweigh the possible risks to your child.

Anyone who wishes to stop taking sleeping pills, particularly after prolonged use, should seek doctor's advice to prevent these withdrawal symptoms from occurring.

Side effects

- The most common side effects are:
- Drowsiness and light-headedness
- Dependence & withdrawal symptoms
- Headaches

Interactions

Sleeping pills may interact with other medicines for example cough and cold remedies, which can increase the sedative effect.

Alcohol increases the sedative effect of sleeping pills.

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking any other medication or if you have any questions regarding your medicine.

