



# Ziprasidone

*What you should know about taking ziprasidone (Geodon)*

Ziprasidone is also known by the brand name Geodon.

Ziprasidone is an atypical antipsychotic that acts on the serotonergic and dopaminergic systems among others.

Ziprasidone is used to treat psychosis, schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder, and bipolar disorder, especially the manic phase. It can also help with anxiety, difficulty sleeping and to enhance the effect of antidepressants.

## What should my health care provider know before I take this medication?

Alert your provider if you are taking any other medication or if you are pregnant, breastfeeding, or plan to become pregnant. Please tell your provider if you have a seizure disorder, heart, kidney or liver disease. Also tell your provider if you have had heart rhythm problems or long QT syndrome (an abnormal electrical conduction of the heart).

## How do I take it?

Take this medication exactly as your provider prescribes. Swallow the capsules whole with water. Do not crush or chew them. Take this medication with food at the same times each day.

## What are the possible side effects?

Feeling dizzy when you sit up or stand quickly is a possible side effect. Getting up slowly may help.

Rarely, this medicine may cause a painful erection that will not return to normal. It can lead to permanent erectile dysfunction if not treated.

Drowsiness, nausea, constipation, diarrhea, rash, weight gain, increased cough and runny nose are possible side effects as well.

Avoid long exposure to the sun, heavy exercise, high temperatures and dehydration. Ziprasidone could interfere with your body's ability to cool down.

If taken for years, there is a very small risk of developing tardive dyskinesia (a permanent disorder of uncontrolled movement involving twitching of the face, body, tongue, or jaw).

## Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns. UWMC Clinic staff is also available to help at any time.

UW Outpatient  
Psychiatry Clinic  
206-598-7792

After hours or on the weekend call the UW Psychiatry resident on-call at 206-598-6190

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Other serious yet rare side effects include seizures, tremors, feeling that you need to be moving constantly, muscle spasms, and neuroleptic malignant syndrome (a temporary but serious disorder of muscle contractions linked with high fever and abnormal vital signs).

### When will it start working?

You may start to notice subtle improvement in your symptoms right away. The full effect of the medication will not be realized until you have taken a steady dose for weeks.

### What should I do if I miss a dose?

You should take it as soon as you remember unless it is within 2 hours of the next scheduled dose. In that case, skip the missed dose and take the next one as directed. Do not take double doses.

### When should I call my provider?

Call your provider, get emergency medical care, or call 911 if you:

- Feel suicidal or homicidal.
- Have an allergic reaction to your medication (hives, itching, rash, trouble breathing, tightness in chest, swelling of your lips, tongue, or throat).
- Have had a seizure.
- Have involuntary movements (facial or body twitching that you cannot control).
- Feel dizzy when you stand or sit up and getting up slowly does not relieve the feeling.
- Have high fever and muscle stiffness.
- Have an erection that lasts more than 4 hours.
- Faint or notice any change in your heartbeat.

### Where can I learn more about ziprasidone?

- [www.geodon.com](http://www.geodon.com)
- Ask your pharmacist or healthcare provider.

References: Micromedex, and *Handbook of Psychiatric Drug Therapy*, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition by Arana and Rosenbaum.