



Refills

Your dose of drug information in between sessions

Zopiclone: dose, next-day impairment, tablet strengths and tablet splitting

The BC Provincial Academic Detailing (PAD) Service's topic, [Medications for Insomnia](#), addresses:

- The strength of recommendations for and against specific medications in contemporary clinical practice guidelines
- Prescribing principles applicable to medications for insomnia
- Drug information relevant to the prescribing, deprescribing and monitoring of medications for insomnia

Our [Medications for Insomnia](#) handout identifies several prescribing principles, including: Use low starting doses, and be aware of changes to the maximum recommended doses for benzodiazepine receptor agonists such as zopiclone.¹ In 2014, Health Canada reduced dosage recommendations for zopiclone, informed by evidence that next-day impairment can persist for up to 11 hours after zopiclone is taken as an evening dose.² Patients prescribed zopiclone should be counselled to wait at least 12 hours before driving or engaging in other activities that require full alertness.²

The table below reflects current Health Canada zopiclone dose recommendations and identifies available tablet strengths. All tablet strengths can be quartered, providing lower doses for tapering, if needed.

Zopiclone dose and dosage forms		
Dose ²		Tablet strengths and tablet splitting
3.75 mg	initial dose for all adults	Zopiclone is available in the following tablet strengths:
5 mg	maximum dose for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ people aged 65 and older ▪ people with hepatic or renal impairment (contraindicated in severe hepatic impairment) ▪ people taking medications that strongly inhibit CYP3A4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 3.75 mg (round, orange tablet): not scored, but can be split ▪ 5 mg (round, white tablet): not scored, but can be split ▪ 7.5 mg (blue, oval tablet): scored, can be split <p>Tablet splitting: we successfully quartered tablets using a pill splitter*, achieving even lower doses, which can facilitate tapering</p>
7.5 mg	maximum dose	*Pill splitters are available for purchase in community pharmacies, approximate cost < \$15

¹BC Provincial Academic Detailing Service: Medications for Insomnia (December 2020)

²Health Canada Recalls and Safety Alerts: Zopiclone New Dosage Recommendations to Minimize the Risk of Next Day Impairment (November 19, 2014)