

Ramelteon

Ramelteon (Rozerem) is a medication for insomnia. It works through the melatonin system that regulates the body's clock. Unlike other sleep medications, it is not addictive or habit-forming and does not cause withdrawal problems.

Ramelteon may not cause drowsiness immediately. Rather, it helps to stabilize sleep gradually, and may take up to 2 weeks to work fully. It will likely make you feel like you're gently drifting off to sleep. With regular use, ramelteon also lowers depression, particularly in bipolar disorder.

How should I take it?

Take ramelteon within 30 minutes of bedtime (it peaks after 0.5-1.5 hours). Its benefits build up gradually so should be taken every night, however, there are no withdrawal problems if you miss a dose. To avoid falls, you should get into bed and remain in bed after taking it. It's best to take on an empty stomach as food delays its onset by 30-60 minutes.

Side effects

Ramelteon is generally well tolerated and does not carry serious medical risks. About 1 in 15 people stop the medication because of side effects, most commonly dizziness, fatigue, headache, nausea and – paradoxically – insomnia.

Although it can cause dizziness, falls, driving problems, and morning fatigue, these risks are lower with ramelteon than with other sleep medicines. Any side effects – such as drowsiness – will last up to 6 hours after taking it.

Drug Interactions

Ramelteon is metabolized by the CYP1A2 system in the liver. Its levels may be altered by medications that interact with this system (e.g. fluvoxamine). You can check for full drug interactions at this website (please talk with us about the information you find):

reference.medscape.com/drug-interactionchecker

How to store and dispose of medication

Key Points

1. Ramelteon is non-addictive.
2. It works gradually to stabilize sleep rhythms, so you'll need to take it nightly for at least 2 weeks to know if it works. It may not cause drowsiness like other sleep medicines do.

- Keep out of the reach of children.
- Store away from heat, direct light and damp places.
- To safely dispose of unwanted pills: Do not pour in the toilet or sink (it will enter the water supply). To prevent children or pets from eating it, mix unwanted pills in a bag with water and inedible trash (such as coffee grounds) and throw in the garbage.

Cost and insurance coverage

Ramelteon is available generic. If you are paying out of pocket, you'll find the lowest price at www.goodrx.com.

—Chris Aiken, MD, updated 6/25/2025