

# Ramelteon

Ramelteon (Rozerem) is a medication for insomnia which works through the melatonin system which regulates the body's clock. It is not habit-forming, and it usually does 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. Ramelteon also has benefits for bipolar depression – people who took it had fewer days of depression.

## How should I take it?

Ramelteon should be taken 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.

Regarding dizziness, falls, driving problems and morning fatigue, these risks are definitely lower with ramelteon than with other sleep medicines. However, everyone's response is different, so monitor how it effects you when first starting it. Any side effects – such as drowsiness – will last up to 6 hours after taking it.

## Abuse and Dependence

Ramelteon is a controlled substance (schedule IV), but likely has low abuse potential as

studies found that people with addiction had little or no preference for it. So far, no withdrawal problems have been found when ramelteon is stopped after prolonged use, but more time is necessary to fully research and uncover potential dependence problems.

## Drug Interactions

Ramelteon is metabolized by the CYP1A2 system in the liver. It's 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](http://reference.medscape.com/drug-interactionchecker)

## Key Points

1. Ramelteon is non-addictive. 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.
2. If your insurer requires authorization, contact our receptionist [auth@moodtreatmentcenter.com](mailto:auth@moodtreatmentcenter.com).

## How to store and dispose of medication

- 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 not available in generic form and may require prior authorization in order for your insurer to pay for it. Please check with your pharmacist to see if prior authorization is required as this may take time for us to arrange

with your insurer. Contact our receptionist (use the link at [moodtreatmentcenter.com](http://moodtreatmentcenter.com)) to alert us that you'll need authorization.

Generic options will likely become available after its patent expires on 7/22/2019.

—Chris Aiken, MD, updated 5/14/2016

### Quick facts

Brand	Rozerem
Dose range	8mg at night
Sizes	Tabs: 8mg
Release date	7/22/2005
FDA-approval	Insomnia