

Sleep Medications

Non-prescription:

- * Alluna Sleep
- * Benadryl
- * Excedrin PM
- * Melatonin
- * Sominex
- * Tylenol PM

Prescription:

- * Ambien (zolpidem tartrate)
- * Ativan (lorazepam)
- * Dalmane (flurazepam)
- * Desyrel (trazodone)
- * Doral (quazepam)
- * Elavil (amitriptyline)
- * Halcion (triazolam)
- * ProSom (estazolam)
- * Restoril (temazepam)
- * Sonata (zaleplon)
- * Valium (diazepam)
- * Xanax (alprazolam)

Alluna™ Sleep is a natural herbal supplement—a unique formulation that combines the gentle natural, sleep promoting properties of the valerian plant and hops. It's been clinically tested and shown to be effective in helping your body find its natural sleep pattern. **If you are taking guaifenesin, you cannot take Alluna because it is an herbal remedy!**

Benedryl (Parke-Davis) or Sominex (Beecham Products) – Diphenhydramine – is used to treat allergic reactions, coughing, insomnia, motion sickness, and Parkinson's disease. (Do not take this when you have a cold! It can make a cold worse by thickening nasal secretions and drying mucous membranes. Diphenhydramine can cause harmful adverse effects, more commonly in people over 60 than in younger people. These effects include: confusion, dizziness, fainting, difficult or painful urination, constipation, dry mouth, nose or throat, nightmares, unusual excitement, nervousness, restlessness, or irritability. Do NOT take this medication if you have glaucoma or enlarged prostate. Signs of overdose: clumsiness or unsteadiness, dry mouth, nose, or throat, flushed or red face, shortness of breath, trouble breathing, seizures, hallucinations, trouble sleeping, severe drowsiness, faintness or lightheadedness, sore throat and fever, unusual bleeding or bruising, unusual tiredness or weakness. Dr. St. Amand recommends Benadryl for *occasional* sleep problems.

Excedrin PM and Tylenol PM – Acetaminophen and Diphenhydramine (Benedryl) – is taken for pain and sleep. Acetaminophen does not help inflammation like aspirin does, but it also does not cause the stomach bleeding that aspirin can cause. Acetaminophen can cause liver damage, especially in older adults, if you take more than the recommended dose or if you take it continuously for more than 10 days. Adverse effects: yellow eyes or skin; bloody or cloudy urine; trouble urinating or painful urination; skin rash, hives or itching; unexplained fever or sore throat; unusual bleeding or bruising; unusual tiredness or weakness; bloody or black, tarry stools; lower back or side pain; pinpoint red spots on skin; sores, ulcers or white spots on lips or in mouth.

Melatonin - Although melatonin is widely sold as a sleep aid, it remains controversial in medical circles. Because melatonin (a hormone) is classified as a dietary supplement, it has not undergone the rigorous clinical testing that medicines do. And with insufficient data to support its claims, many experts question melatonin's true effectiveness and safety.

Ambien (Searle) – Zolpidem is used for short-term relief of insomnia and is only recommended for use for one to three weeks.

Xanax (Pharmacia & Upjohn) – Alprazolam should not be used except for Panic Disorder!

Librium, Tranxene, Valium, Prosom, Dalmane, Paxipam, Ativan, Centrax, Doral, Restoril, Halcion and Xanax all belong to the benzodiazepine family. Although they are widely used for older adults, they present significantly higher risks to people over 60 and lack proven long-term benefits. These drugs can cause unsteady gait, dizziness falling---with an increased risk of hip fractures---automobile accidents that cause injury, impairment of thinking and memory loss, and addiction.1 While some of these sleeping pills stay in the body so long you can still be sedated during the daytime, other drugs in this family stay in the body such a short time you can get rebound insomnia and become confused the following day. **Many older people who use these drugs should not be taking them. They have significant risks and are often prescribed unnecessarily.** The authors of “Worst Pills—Best Pills” state: “Based on our review of the benzodiazepine drugs, which are all effective but differ in their degree of safety, we recommend **(for limited use only)** oxazepam as the safest drug in this family for older adults who truly need a tranquilizer or sleeping pill. The nonbenzodiazepine, buspirone (BUSPAR) is also suggested for limited use....If you are taking a tranquilizer or sleeping pill other than buspirone or oxazepam, ask your doctor to reevaluate your need for this drug. If you do need such a drug, you should be taking one of these two. **The best way to reduce the risks from sleeping pills and tranquilizers is to avoid them if at all possible. Before taking one of these powerful medications, one should try all the non-drug alternatives.**”

Elavil (Zeneca) – Amitriptyline is used to treat depression, but we do not recommend its use because it has more harmful adverse effects than any other drug in its family. If you use amitriptyline, ask your doctor about switching to another antidepressant. **Do not stop taking this drug suddenly.** Your doctor must give you a schedule to lower your dose gradually, to prevent withdrawal symptoms such as headache, mood change, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or trouble sleeping and vivid dreams.

Desyrel (Apothecon) – Trazodone is used to treat severe depression that is not caused by other drugs, by alcohol, or by emotional losses (such as a death in the family). **You should NOT be taking this drug for anxiety or mild depression, or as a sleeping pill.**

Sonata – Zaleplon – This medication is used for the **short term** treatment of insomnia. Side effects may include headache, drowsiness, nausea or stomach upset. Serious side effects (notify your doctor): dizziness, weakness, loss of coordination, muscle joint pain, mental/mood changes, persistent trouble sleeping, memory problems, loss of appetite, tingling of the hands or feet, rash, itching, tremors, eye/ear problems, fast/slow/irregular pulse, chest pain, trouble breathing, blood in the stool, unusual thirst, or change in amount of urine.

Note: It is difficult to sleep if you are in pain. Taking pain medication at night may be necessary *temporarily* while you are reversing your fibromyalgia with guaifenesin. The goal should be to get off all sleeping pills and pain medication as soon as possible---but this can take months or even years. Be patient---but don't forget to ask yourself “Do I *really* need to take this medication or could I try doing without it?” As your reversal progresses, it might be a good idea to keep a calendar for recording when you need to take pain and/or sleep medication and when you can skip it. It's as good an indication as any as to how you are “cycling” and show the improvements that you are making.