DRUG NAME: ZYPREXA
Generic name: olanzapine

General Information: Zyprexa is one of a new generation of drugs called “atypical antipsychotics” and is approved by the FDA for treatment schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. Though “off-label” and not officially approved by the FDA, it is also used to augment the effect of antidepressants in the treatment of depression and anxiety, particularly severe conditions. Its therapeutic action is thought to relate to blocking of dopamine and serotonin receptors in the brain.

Guidelines for Use: Zyprexa is available in 2.5, 5, 7.5, 10, 15, and 20 mg. tablets. Zyprexa Zydis is a form of the drug that disintegrates in the mouth; it is available in 5, 10, 15, and 20 mg. tablets. Tablets should not be broken. No generic form is available at present. The usual starting dose varies according to the person’s symptoms, but is usually in the range of 2.5 – 10 mg. per day. It is normally given once daily, at bedtime, and it may be taken with or without food. The dosage can be increased over time to control symptoms. While Zyprexa may have an immediate calming or sedating effect, it may take several weeks for the full therapeutic effects to be seen. It is frequently used for long-term maintenance in severe disorders. Zyprexa is not habit-forming.

If you forget to take this medication but remember within a few hours, take it when you remember. Otherwise, wait until your next dose. Do not take double doses. Store the drug in a dry, tightly-closed, light-resistant container out of the reach of children.

Side Effects of Zyprexa:

*Note: Most side effects taper off during treatment as you become used to the drug.

Common side effects (10% or more of users experience; notify your clinician if severe):

--drowsiness  --insomnia  --agitation, restlessness*
--dizziness  --dry mouth  --weakness, tremor, rigidity*
--constipation  --weight gain**

*Another medication may be added to reduce these side effects.
**Since significant weight gain can have implications for your general health, it is advisable to keep track of your weight and let your clinician know if it is increasing. Lab work may be ordered for some people taking Zyprexa to monitor blood glucose, cholesterol, and other indices related to weight gain and its complications.

Less common side effects (less than 10% of users experience; notify if severe):

--upset stomach  --abnormal gait  --tremor  --fever
--headache  --joint or back pain  --runny nose
--skin rash: STOP THE DRUG AND CALL YOUR CLINICIAN.
Prolonged use of Zyprexa is associated with slight risk of developing a side effect known as tardive dyskinesia (TD), which causes people to have uncontrollable muscle movements. These often affect the face, mouth, and tongue but can affect any part of the body. Movements may be subtle or marked. TD is sometimes reversed by stopping the drug, but may be permanent. You should work with your clinician to ensure that you are taking the lowest effective dose of Zyprexa to minimize risk of TD. At the same time, it is a highly effective drug and the serious mental health conditions for which it is used often require long-term medication maintenance. You, your loved ones, and your clinician will need to assess the risk/benefit balance in taking drugs with risk of TD.

**Precautions:** Do not take this drug if you have ever had an allergic reaction to Zyprexa. Inform your clinician if you have any known allergies: if you have ever had seizures or been diagnosed with epilepsy, kidney disease, or liver disease; if you are taking any other drug (prescription or non-prescription), vitamin, supplement, or herb; if you are undergoing anesthesia or surgery while taking this drug; if you are a cigarette smoker. **Inform your clinician if you are or might become pregnant.** Except in unusual cases where the mother’s or the fetus’ life is endangered, this drug should not be taken by pregnant women. Women taking Zyprexa should not breast feed. Zyprexa has not been tested in children and is not recommended for use by infants or children. Metabolism of the drug may be slowed in the elderly, so lower doses may be needed.

**This drug often causes drowsiness.** If so, avoid driving or operating machinery until you are sure your alertness and coordination allow for safe operation.

Do not discontinue this drug without consulting with your clinician. Zyprexa should be tapered down slowly and you should be monitored for the re-emergence of symptoms.

To date, overdoses of Zyprexa alone have rarely been fatal. However, immediate emergency medical care should be sought in cases of overdose, particularly if multiple drugs and/or alcohol are suspected. Symptoms of overdosage include drowsiness and slurred speech.

**Interactions:**

**Alcohol:** You should avoid alcohol while taking Zyprexa.

**Food/beverages:** No restrictions.

**Other drugs:** A few drugs increase or decrease the blood level of Zyprexa and dosages may need to be changed if they are used together; these include luvoxamine (Luvox) and carbamazepine (Tegretol). Care should be taken when Zyprexa is used with other medicines that lower blood pressure due to increased risk of dizziness and falling. Zyprexa may increase the effects of other sedating medications such as antihistamines, sedatives, narcotic pain medicines, muscle relaxants, barbiturates and anesthetics. Check with your clinician before taking one of these medications. Zyprexa may decrease the effects of levodopa.