

Melatonin (say: mellow-toe-ninn) for sleep



What is melatonin?

- Melatonin (also called Circadin®, Syncrodin®, Slenyto®, Adaflex® and others) is a natural chemical found in the brain
- Circadin® and Slenyto® are available as tablets
- It is also made as liquids (e.g. 1mg/ml and others) and capsules.

What does melatonin help?

- Taking melatonin helps people to get to sleep
- Melatonin doesn't just send you to sleep, it helps boost a chemical your brain makes called melatonin. Melatonin is the brain's usual trigger to go to sleep
- If you have ADHD, your sleep pattern can become a bit irregular. You might be awake at night and sleep during the day. You might not sleep much at all
- Sometimes melatonin can help get you back in line with day and night
- Melatonin can also help sleep in people with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (autism), Smith-Magenis syndrome or learning disabilities, and with jet-lag.



How and when should I take melatonin?

- Swallow the tablets or capsules whole, with at least half a glass of water whilst sitting or standing
- This is to make sure that they reach your stomach and do not stick in your throat
- Take your melatonin about an hour before going to bed
- There is no problem about taking it with or after food.

How long will I have to wait before it works?

- Melatonin usually starts to have an effect in about an hour or two
- You should make sure that you do not watch television or use a computer or iPad for an hour before going to bed as the light from these can stop your body making its own melatonin.



How long will I need to keep taking melatonin for?

- Melatonin can be taken for up to 13 weeks, which is usually enough to get your brain back into the right pattern of sleeping again
- Some people might need to take it for a bit longer e.g. up to two years
- You should have this checked every 3 months or so.

Can I stop taking melatonin suddenly?

- Melatonin is not addictive, so you can stop it suddenly with no risk of any problems
- But, to get the best effect, it should be taken until your prescriber says to stop.



What should I do if I forget to take a dose of melatonin?

- Take the dose as soon as you remember, before going to sleep
- If you forget completely, start again the next evening.

Can I cycle or drive while I am taking melatonin?

- You may feel a sleepy the next morning after taking melatonin
- Until this wears off, or you know how melatonin affects you, be careful cycling and, if you are old enough, do not drive or operate machines.



What sort of side-effects might I get with melatonin?

Common (fewer than about 1 in 10 people might get these)

 <p>Headache</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If your head is painful, paracetamol usually helps. 	 <p>Dizziness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling light-headed and faint • Don't stand up too quickly • Try to lie down or sit down if you feel it coming on • Don't drive or cycle.
 <p>Abnormal dreams</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You seem to have more dreams or they are more vivid than usual • This is nothing to worry about • You are probably just remembering your dreams more. 	 <p>Feeling sick or being sick, or stomach pain</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking it after food may help • It usually wears off in a few weeks • If not, tell your prescriber.

This table shows some of the most common side effects and any you might need to take action on. You **must** also see the maker's Patient Information Leaflet for the full list of possible side effects but do not be worried by this. Some side effects are the brain getting used to a medicine and these usually wear off in a few days or weeks. Starting slower may help. If you think you might have a side effect, you should ask your prescriber, pharmacist or other healthcare professional.

The small print: This leaflet is to help you understand more about melatonin. You **must** also read the manufacturer's Patient Information Leaflet (PIL). You may find more on the internet but beware as internet-based information is not always accurate. Do not share medicines with anyone else. The 'I handy charts' will help you compare the main medicines for each condition, how they work and their side effects. Go to our website for fuller answers to these and many other questions.

V07.08 L15 [SRB 05-2022] ©2022 Mistura™ Enterprise Ltd (www.choiceandmedication.org). Choice and Medication™ indemnity applies only to licensed subscribing organisations and the personal use by that organisation's service users and carers. Use by non-subscribing organisations or individuals is prohibited