



## Mid-Valley Behavioral Care Network

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1660 Oak Street SE, Suite 230 ▪ Salem, Oregon ▪ 97301

PHONE: (503) 361-2647 ▪ FAX: (503) 585-4989 ▪ [www.mvbcn.org](http://www.mvbcn.org)

### Olanzapine (Zyprexa)

The medication Olanzapine (**Zyprexa**) is an **atypical** neuroleptic. It is used to treat psychosis. Psychosis can be experienced as disorganized thinking or behavior and unusual perceptions (hearing voices, seeing things, feeling paranoid). Zyprexa is also used to treat mood instability associated with manic-depressive disorder. Symptoms including poor sleep, racing thoughts and severe mood swings can be reduced with Zyprexa. Generally these symptoms interfere with your life goals. There may be other reasons someone takes Zyprexa.

Zyprexa is FDA approved for Schizophrenia and manic and mixed states with Bipolar Disorder. In addition it is approved for agitation and to be used in combination with other medications for depression.

Although Zyprexa can be very helpful, it can cause some side effects that you should know of before accepting treatment with it. The most common include: **drowsiness, sedation and weight gain**. **Other side effects include dry mouth, constipation and headache**. Although these effects generally occur during initial treatment, some remain throughout treatment and may warrant discontinuing the medication. Talk with your provider about it.

Recently, neuroleptics have been found to be associated with diabetes and weight gain, high cholesterol, and high triglycerides. These problems can lead to obesity and cardiovascular issues. Though serious, these side effects are uncommon. Nevertheless, it is important to talk to your provider about these issues. Specifically, Zyprexa can cause problems in this area. Although very effective at treating symptoms, these potential side effects warrant you watching what you eat, and getting your blood sugar, cholesterol, and triglycerides check occasionally.

Again, Zyprexa is generally a well-tolerated medication which works well at helping people restore their lives, but these other issues are serious. Talk to your provider about it.

Zyprexa is different from older **typical** neuroleptics in that it is less likely to cause EPS (ExtraPyramidal Side effects). But in the rare instances that these may occur they include resting tremor, muscle stiffness or spasms, abnormal movements of the mouth, tongue, extremities. These are usually benign and can be treated with side effect medication. Tardive Dyskinesia (unusual movements of the mouth, tongue, arms) and NMS (high fever, racing heart, agitation, sweating) although rare, are serious side effects of the older **typical** neuroleptics. These effects are considerably lower with Zyprexa.

The beneficial effect of Zyprexa can sometimes take 3-5 days to three weeks, sometimes longer. The maximum effect can sometimes take as long as 9-12 months. Generally if no effect is felt after 6 weeks, then a different medication or different dosage should be considered. The usual dosage range is 10-20 mg a day.

Zyprexa is generally safe with other medications. But as with all medications, please let your provider know if you are engaged in other treatments. There are no dietary restrictions.

There are supplemental ways to improve life which include:

- exercise
- good sleep habits
- good eating habits
- yoga
- a hobby
- visiting with family or friends
- psychotherapy

Although important, these methods alone cannot restore clear thinking and stable mood.

If you have further questions about this medication, please ask your medical provider or your pharmacist.

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