**Ambien** also known as Zolpidem and is a prescription medication used to help people fall asleep faster and stay asleep longer.

### So how does it work?

It works with a chemical in the brain called GABA. GABA causes drowsiness and sleepiness. Ambien has been shown to reduce the time it takes to get to sleep, reduce the number of awakenings at night, and increase total sleep time.

### What happens when Ambien is mixed with....

**Alcohol?**
- When mixed with alcohol, it may cause more sedation.

**Marijuana?**
- When mixed with marijuana, it may cause more sedation.

### What if you take Ambien while you are pregnant?
- The effects during pregnancy are not known.

### Is there a chance this substance could contain contaminants if it is obtained “on the street”? If so, what are the effects of these contaminants?
- If Ambien is obtained from a licensed pharmacy, it should not contain any unknown substances.
- If it is bought “on the street,” it could contain multiple unknown substances or it may not even be Ambien.

### Other things to consider...
- This a prescription drug and should not be used unless under the supervision of a doctor.

### Short term effects of taking Ambien

#### Judgment
- May cause a person to have unusual behavior or thinking including anxiety, aggression, confusion, agitation, depression, hallucinations and suicidal thoughts.

#### Memory
- May cause memory loss. A person may not remember what has happened for several hours after taking the medicine.
- Ambien can cause episodes of memory loss. This can include participating in activities such as, driving, eating, and making phone calls without remembering the activity.

#### Health
- Abrupt discontinuation can cause withdrawal symptoms including insomnia, fatigue, lightheadedness, headaches, difficulty with coordination, stomach cramps, vomiting, sweating, and seizures.

### Long term effects of taking Ambien

#### Judgment
- With long-term use there is a risk of dependence. This is most likely to occur when the drug is taken for several weeks or at high doses.
- People with a history of substance abuse are at a greater risk of developing dependence.

#### Memory
- With long-term use there is the same possibility of memory loss as mentioned above.
- The effects on memory are no longer experienced when the drug is stopped.
- The long-term effects on memory are unknown.

#### Health
- If used everyday for several weeks it may not be effective to help a person fall asleep.
- Ambien can cause tolerance, dependence, and withdrawal.
- These effects can be avoided if Ambien is only taken for short periods of time (1-2 weeks).

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For more information contact the Student Health Center at 348.3878

References

1) Ambien full prescribing information