Jeffrey Panko NP
PSYCHIATRY

Jeffrey Panko, PMHNP-BC
Phone 646-549-4694 | Fax 646-558-4238
JMPankoNP@JeffreyPanko.com
jeffreypanko.com

PATIENT EDUCATION

Zonisamide

Zonegran / Zonisade oral suspension / Generic capsules

A guide for adults taking zonisamide.
Follow the directions on your prescription and your provider's recommendations.

BUILD THE DOSE SLOWLY | DO NOT STOP OR CHANGE IT YOURSELF

Formulations: Capsules and oral suspension have different handling instructions. The long duration means dose changes should be gradual.

What it is used for

Zonisamide treats focal seizures. Psychiatric or weight-related uses are off-label and require a separate evidence discussion; it is not an established bipolar mood stabilizer.

How it works

It affects sodium and calcium channels and inhibits carbonic anhydrase. These actions can reduce seizure activity and also contribute to metabolic acidosis or kidney stones.

What to expect over time

The dose is often increased gradually to balance benefit and side effects. Track the condition being treated and report changes after each adjustment.

Taking your medication

- Take at the prescribed times, with or without food.
- Swallow capsules whole. Shake suspension and use an accurate dosing device.
- Maintain appropriate hydration.
- If you miss a dose, take it when you remember unless it is almost time for the next dose. Then skip it. Do not double a dose.
- Consult with your provider before stopping.

Jeffrey Panko NP
PSYCHIATRY

Jeffrey Panko, PMHNP-BC
Phone 646-549-4694 | Fax 646-558-4238
JMPankoNP@JeffreyPanko.com
jeffreypanko.com

ZONISAMIDE / 02

Side effects and safety

Possible side effects

- Sleepiness, dizziness, or fatigue
- Reduced appetite or weight loss
- Word-finding or concentration problems
- Nausea or poor coordination

Keeping track of treatment

Some side effects resolve with time; others may require a change of medication. Discuss persistent or bothersome side effects with your provider.

Report changes in mood, behavior, concentration, or suicidal thoughts. Antiseizure medicines carry a warning about suicidal thoughts and behavior.

Keep follow-up appointments. Your provider may adjust treatment based on symptoms, kidney or liver function, other medicines, and any recommended laboratory tests.

Bicarbonate and kidney function may be checked. Report reduced sweating, overheating, rapid breathing, flank pain, or blood in urine.

If you take too much

For a suspected overdose, call Poison Control at **1-800-222-1222** immediately, even if you feel well. Call 911 for a seizure, collapse, trouble breathing, or inability to wake.

Before you start

Discuss kidney or liver disease, previous medication rashes, depression, and the reason for treatment.

Discuss pregnancy, pregnancy plans, and breastfeeding with your provider. Treatment decisions should consider both the medication and the condition being treated.

A sulfonamide allergy can rule out treatment. Discuss kidney disease, stones, severe rashes, glaucoma, and ketogenic diets. Review pregnancy-related risks before treatment when possible.

Medicines and interactions

Review all your medications with your provider, including over-the-counter medicines and supplements. Have new medications checked before taking them.

Other carbonic-anhydrase inhibitors can add acidosis and kidney-stone risk. Valproate or topiramate may add hyperammonemia concerns.

Enzyme-inducing medicines can change levels; alcohol and sedatives add impairment.

Jeffrey Panko NP
PSYCHIATRY

Jeffrey Panko, PMHNP-BC
Phone 646-549-4694 | Fax 646-558-4238
JMPankoNP@JeffreyPanko.com
jeffreypanko.com

ZONISAMIDE / 03

Living with your treatment

When to get help

Emergency symptoms. Get emergency care for blistering rash or mouth sores, severe overheating, sudden eye pain or vision changes, or a prolonged or repeated seizure.

Prompt medical advice. Contact your provider promptly for a new rash, severe unsteadiness, unusual confusion, or major changes in mood or behavior.

If you feel unsafe or have thoughts of self-harm, call 911 or go to an emergency department.

Your questions answered

Can I stop if I feel well?
Consult with your provider before stopping. Abrupt withdrawal can cause seizures or a return of the condition being treated.

Does use for seizures mean I have epilepsy?
Not necessarily. Some antiseizure medicines have other approved or off-label uses. Confirm the specific goal of your prescription.

Everyday tips

Use reminders and arrange refills before you run out.

Avoid driving until you know how treatment affects you; seizure-related driving restrictions may also apply.

Storage and safety

Keep medication in its labeled container, away from excess heat and moisture and out of reach of children and pets. Do not share it. Ask a pharmacy about disposal of unused medication.

Sources

Official prescribing information: zonisamide
Official prescribing information: zonisamide
MedlinePlus: zonisamide

Educational handout; does not replace your prescription or provider's recommendations.