

Melatonin tablets - advice for crushing

If you have been given a prescription for melatonin tablets and been asked to crush them prior to taking them the following advice may be useful.

Melatonin prolonged-release 2mg tablets (also called Circadin®)

Prepare the tablet as follows:

1. Crush the tablet with a tablet crusher, or between two metal spoons.
2. Add the powder to 15-30mL of water, orange juice, milk or soft food such as jam or yoghurt, and mix well.
3. If mixed with liquid, draw up the solution into an oral syringe. If mixed with food, place on a spoon.
4. Administer the dose to the patient.
5. If used, rinse out tablet crusher with water and administer this also.

Melatonin prolonged-release 1mg or 5mg tablets (also called Slenyto®)

Prepare the tablet as follows:

1. Crush the tablet with a tablet crusher, or between two metal spoons.
2. Add the powder to 15-30mL of orange juice or yoghurt and mix well.
3. If mixed with juice, draw up the solution into an oral syringe. If mixed with yogurt, place on a spoon.
4. Administer the dose to the patient.
5. If used, rinse out tablet crusher with water and administer this also.

- Don't crush tablets in plastic containers, other than commercially available tablet crushers, as the medicine may stick to the plastic.
- Don't use boiling water to dissolve tablets as it may affect the way the medicine works.
- Don't leave oral medicines unattended in syringes.
- Don't administer any medicine that you have not prepared yourself.

Tablet crushers can be purchased from your local community pharmacy, for a few pounds. They are reusable and can be washed and dried after use. If using two metal spoons, select two spoons of similar size sitting one spoon inside the one below. Make a small gap between the spoons, and place one tablet between these surfaces and gently squeeze the spoons together. The tablet should break up without shooting out. Further crushing will make a finer powder. Please note that it is not necessary to crush to a very fine powder, as once the tablet is roughly crushed, it will offer "immediate release" characteristics as desired. Repeat if more than one tablet is required to provide the dose.

There are no safety concerns with crushing these tablets, however it will affect the prolonged-release properties of the product. The tablet keeps its prolonged-release properties as long as it is swallowed whole. The prolonged-release properties will be maintained to some extent if the tablet is halved or divided into 4 quarters. If it is crushed, it will release melatonin similarly to an immediate release formulation.

If you have any queries, please speak with the person who prescribed your medicine, your community pharmacist, the pharmacist at your practice, or your GP.