FLURAZEPAM (Dalmane) Fact Sheet [G]

Bottom Line:
Flurazepam is an older benzodiazepine that has fallen out of favor due to its very long half-life and its active metabolites. It is not our first choice of benzodiazepines for insomnia; we prefer temazepam or lorazepam instead.

FDA Indications:
Insomnia (short term).

Off-Label Uses:
Anxiety disorders; acute mania or psychosis; catatonia.

Dosage Forms:
Capsules (G): 15 mg, 30 mg.

Dosage Guidance:
Start 15 mg QHS. Max 30 mg nightly. Use lower doses in elderly.

Monitoring: No routine monitoring recommended unless clinical picture warrants.

Cost: $

Side Effects:
- Most common: Somnolence, dizziness, weakness, ataxia.
- Serious but rare: Anterograde amnesia, increased fall risk, paradoxical reaction (irritability, agitation), respiratory depression (avoid in patients with sleep apnea or on opioids).
- Pregnancy/breastfeeding: Potential risks with exposure in early and late pregnancy; use caution in breastfeeding.

Mechanism, Pharmacokinetics, and Drug Interactions:
- Binds to benzodiazepine receptors to enhance GABA effects.
- Metabolized primarily through CYP3A4; t ½: 40–100 hours.
- Avoid concomitant use with other CNS depressants, including alcohol and opioids (additive effects). Avoid use with potent CYP3A4 inhibitors (eg, erythromycin, fluvoxamine, ketoconazole) as they may increase flurazepam levels significantly, whereas CYP3A4 inducers (eg, carbamazepine) may decrease flurazepam levels; adjust flurazepam dosing.

Clinical Pearls:
- Schedule IV controlled substance.
- Flurazepam is less favored than temazepam because of active metabolites, long half-life, potential for accumulation, and next-day grogginess.
- Tolerance to sedative effect may develop within two to four weeks of use, and benzodiazepines affect sleep architecture; thus, long-term use is discouraged.

Fun Fact:
Advertising for Dalmane in the 1970s featured a nightgown-clad woman trapped inside a giant eyeball sphere, trying to get out. The tagline: "One less concern for your patient with insomnia."