

Suvorexant (say: Sue-vo-wrecks-ant)

What is suvorexant at the right time used for?

- Suvorexant (also called Silumbra[®] and Belsomra[®]) is used to help treat insomnia i.e. problems getting to sleep and staying asleep
- It is made as tablets.

- Orexin (also called hypocretin) is a chemical messenger in the brain
- Its job in the brain is to keep it (and us) awake
- Suvorexant blocks the effects of orexin
- It makes us feel sleepy because it blocks the effects of alerting orexin.

See our handy fact sheet on 'Sleep Hygiene' for some practical tips and information on sleeping.

Suvorexant is not funded by the healthcare systems so is only usually available as a private prescription

What is the usual dose of suvorexant?

- The usual dose of suvorexant is usually 10mg at night, sometimes up to 20mg.

How should I take suvorexant?

- Swallow the tablet with at least half a glass of water whilst sitting or standing so it does not get stuck in your throat.

When should I take suvorexant?

- Take your suvorexant at bedtime
- It can be taken with or after food, but it works quicker without food
- Take your dose no sooner than 30 minutes before going to bed
- If you take it more than 30 minutes before going to bed you are at risk of accidents before you get to bed.

What are the alternatives to suvorexant?

- There are other medicines (e.g. benzodiazepines), talking therapies and treatments for insomnia, and the causes of insomnia.

- ☞ See our "Handy chart" for insomnia to help you compare the medicines available
- ☞ This will help you talk to your doctor, nurse, pharmacist or other health professional.

How long will suvorexant take to work?

- The dose starts working within 15-30 minutes and has its peak affect at about 2 hours
- It will take an hour or so longer to work if you take it with or soon after a meal.

How long will I need to keep taking it for?

- The clinical trials show that it still works after 3 months treatment
- How long you take it will depend on your history and how well you are doing
- It will, of course, also stop working when you stop taking it.

Is suvorexant addictive and can I stop taking it suddenly?

- Suvorexant is not addictive
- If you take it regularly you could come to rely on suvorexant to get to sleep
- If you have taken suvorexant regularly every night you could get "rebound insomnia" if you stop it suddenly
- This means that for a few days or weeks you may find it more difficult to get to sleep than before
- It is best to reduce the dose slowly over a few days or weeks
- Try to choose a time when your stress levels will be lower
- Discuss this with your doctor, nurse, pharmacist or other health professional.

See our handy fact sheet on 'Coming off medicines'

What should I do if I forget to take a dose of suvorexant?

- This is not really a problem if you can get to sleep
- You can take a dose if you are still awake but there must be at least 7 hours before you drive or operate machines. It can may affect your alertness and reactions for the 7 hours of a dose.

If you need to take this every night, and have problems remembering your doses (many people do) ask your pharmacist, doctor or case manager about this. Webster, other packs and Apps can help you.

Can I drink alcohol while I am taking suvorexant?

- If you drink alcohol while taking suvorexant it may make you feel more sleepy
- This is important if you need to drive or operate machines and you must seek advice on this.



Will suvorexant affect my other medication?

Suvorexant has a few possible interactions with other medicines. The main ones include:

- Suvorexant can cause sleepiness (a bit obvious, as that's the reason people take it!) and so you should be careful if taking it with alcohol or another medicine that also causes sleepiness e.g. benzodiazepines (e.g. diazepam, lorazepam, temazepam), some antidepressants etc
- Suvorexant may need a higher dose if you are taking e.g. ketoconazole or some HIV medicines.

You **must** see the Consumer Medicine Information (CMI) leaflet for the full list of interactions. Some of these medicines can still be used together but you must follow your doctor's instructions carefully.

Will I need any blood or other tests if I am taking suvorexant?

- You should not need any blood tests.

Can I drive or cycle while I am taking suvorexant?

- Suvorexant may affect your ability to drive
- Do **not** drive within **7 hours** of a dose, do not take it with alcohol or other CNS depressants and not to drive or work at heights if you are still sleepy with suvorexant
- Make sure you know how suvorexant affects you as you may not be able to drive as well even if you feel fully awake.

What sort of side-effects might I get if I am taking suvorexant?

This table shows the few side effects you might get from suvorexant and any you might need to take action on. You **must** also see the maker's Patient Information Leaflet for the full list of possible side effects. Some people get no side effects at all. If you think you might have a side effect to this medicine, you should ask your doctor, pharmacist or case manager.

Side effect	What happens	What to do about it
COMMON (<i>fewer than about 1 in 10 people might get these</i>)		
Somnolence	You feel sleepy or sluggish. It can last for a few hours after taking your dose, or longer.	Don't drive or use machines. It probably means you should have a lower dose or try a different hypnotic.
VERY COMMON (<i>fewer than about 1 in 100 people might get these</i>)		
Nightmares	Unpleasant dreams	This probably means your dose is too high. Talk to your doctor about this.
RARE but important (<i>can be serious if not dealt with quickly</i>)		
Thoughts of harming yourself	Feeling anxious, restless, poor sleep and feel you might want to harm yourself	See your doctor in the next day.
Somnambulism	Sleep-walking or doing other odd things while asleep.	This is very rare but if you think you might be doing things while you are asleep let your doctor know as soon possible. This has not been reported with suvorexant but can occur with some other sleeping medicines.

Lifeline provides 24hr telephone crisis support on 13 11 14 or visit www.lifeline.org.au for information & downloads

The small print: This leaflet is to help you understand more about suvorexant. You **must** also read the manufacturer's Consumer Medicine Information (CMI) Leaflet. You may find more on the internet but beware as internet-based information is not always accurate. Do not share medicines with anyone else.

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