

# Silexan

Silexan is a German medication that is approved for anxiety in a dozen European countries. In America Silexan is not available by prescription, but can be obtained over the counter as it is a formulated, natural extract of the lavender plant.

Lavender's benefits for sleep and anxiety are widely known, though it's usually used in an aromatherapy form. The Silexan form purifies the anti-anxiety ingredient into a potent tablet; so potent that it beat one of the most popular medications for anxiety (paroxetine or Paxil) in clinical tests.

People start to feel better on Silexan within the first week of starting it, and these effects can continue to build over the first two months. It can also improve depression and sleep.

## How does it work?

Silexan works through the serotonin-1A receptor in the brain, which is involved in depression and anxiety. Several medications also work through this receptor: vortioxetine (Trintellix), buspirone (Buspar), aripiprazole (Abilify), lurasidone (Latuda), and quetiapine (Seroquel). However, those medications do many more things in the brain (and have many more side effects than Silexan).

Silexan also affects other receptors like glutamate (involved in ketamine's benefits) and GABA (involved in benzodiazepine's benefits). However, unlike benzodiazepines it has no addictive properties.

## How should I take it?

Silexan was studied at 80 mg and 160 mg at night; both doses were effective and the higher dose lead to greater improvement.

The Silexan used in research was manufactured by the Schwabe Pharmaceuticals. A product available in the USA which contains Silexan is:

Nature's Way Calm Aid: 80mg (cost = 50 cents/day for 80mg dose on Amazon or [www.luckyvitamin.com](http://www.luckyvitamin.com)). Find links to good products at:

[www.chrisaikenmd.com/supplements](http://www.chrisaikenmd.com/supplements)

For aromatherapy, any form of lavender can be used. It often comes as an oil that enters the air through reeds or other diffusers.

## What if I forget a dose?

Take the missed dose as soon as you remember it. However, if it is almost time for the next dose, skip the missed dose and continue your regular dosing schedule. Do not take a double dose to make up for a missed one.



## How long do I need to take it?

This depends on your diagnosis and which other medications you are taking.

## What happens if I stop it?

Silexan is non-addictive and does not have withdrawal problems

## Side effects

Silexan did not have significant side effects and was as well tolerated as a placebo (sugar pill). It can cause reflux or lavender-flavored burping.

Silexan is not well studied in children and may have risks in adolescent boys that are not seen in adults. In theory, it may have estrogenized effects and could cause breast growth. This is a note of caution, but not a risk that is known to happen. On the other hand, lavender products are often used for women with breast cancer without problems (despite this theoretical possibility of estrogen like effects).

Do not swallow lavender that isn't designed as an oral form (e.g. aromatherapy lavender).

This graph shows how lavender improved anxiety in 60-70% of people and fully resolved anxiety in 50%. You can see how silexan 160mg (the black line) was more effective than the antidepressant paroxetine (Paxil) and a sugar pill (the white and gray lines on the right end).

**Where to purchase it**

Find links to good products at:

[www.chrisaikenmd.com/supplements](http://www.chrisaikenmd.com/supplements)

—Chris Aiken, MD, updated 8/6/2024

