

Silexan

Silexan is a medication that is approved for anxiety in a dozen European countries. In the US, it is not legally regulated as a prescription because it is a natural extract of the lavender plant. The German pharmaceutical company (Schwabe) that manufacturers Silexan has made it available over the counter in the US as CalmAid.

Lavender's benefits for sleep and anxiety are widely known, though it's usually used in an aromotherapy 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/Paxil) in a large clinical trial. In anxiety, Silexan equaled the benzodiazepine lorazepam, and in depression it equaled the SSRI sertraline/Zoloft.

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. Silexan also improves 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 to purchase and take it

Silexan is available as 80 mg capsules, but the 160 mg dose is more potent (2 capsules).

It is sold as *Nature's Way Calm Aid*. The cost is \$15-30 per month (on Amazon or www.luckyvitamin.com). Find links to good products at:

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.

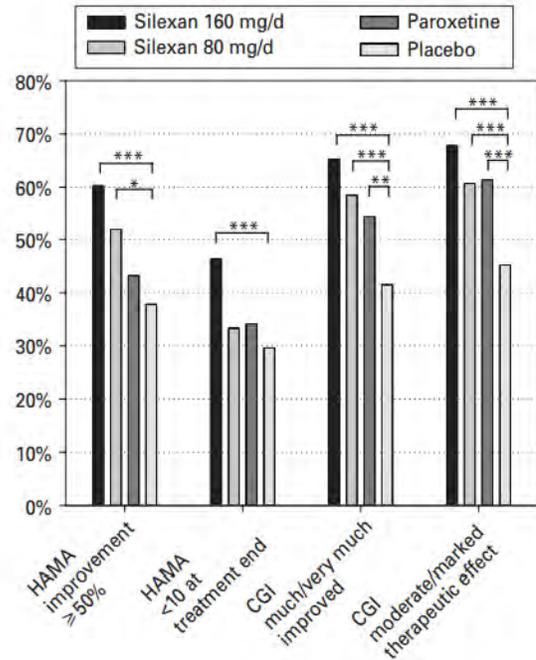
Side effects

The main side effect is lavender-flavored burps, sometimes with gastric reflux. Otherwise,

Silexan is well tolerated and did not cause significant side effects in the trials.

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 then the antidepressant paroxetine (Paxil) and a sugar pill (the white and gray lines on the right end).

—Chris Aiken, MD, updated 6/26/2025