

Orexin Antagonists

Daridorexant (Quviviq), lumborexant (Dayvigo), and suvorexant (Belsomra) are medications for insomnia that works by reducing orexin, a neurotransmitter that keeps people awake. They are an advance over older sleep medications in several way:

- They improve next-day cognition
- Little to no risk of falls, addiction, or sleep walking
- Safer in older age

They also improve sleep quality, which is something the older sleep medications do not (benzodiazepines and z-hypnotics like Ambien). That is why cognition, memory, and coordination improve the next day after taking them.

They also feel different from other sleep meds. They do not have a “mind altering” quality, are not heavily sedating, and do not reduce anxiety. Despite these differences, people are usually able to change from older meds to the orexin antagonists, and they can work even after the older meds have stopped working.

How should I take it?

Take within 30 minutes of bedtime (they peaks after 0.5-2 hours). You do not have to take it every night; it is best taken as-needed. Best to take on an empty stomach as food delays onset by 1-2 hours.

How long the effects of these medicines last will depend on the person. When first starting the medicine, make sure you have enough time to get at least 7 hours of sleep.

Side effects

Orexin antagonists may impair concentration or driving in the morning. Rarely, people may see or hear things (as if dreaming while awake) after taking it. These effects may be worse if the dose is raised.

Sleep medicines can suppress breathing and should be used with caution if you suffer from sleep apnea or a lung disease. Other drugs that can impair breathing, such as alcohol, opioids or other sedatives (e.g. as benzodiazepines) can worsen these effects.

Key Points

1. Unlike other sleep meds, they improve sleep quality and cognition.
2. Stay in bed after taking these sleep medicines and take them at least 7 hours before planning to wake up.
3. Avoid food within 30 minutes of taking it.
5. Coupons are at quviviq.com, belsomra.com, and dayvigo.com

Do not take the orexin antagonists if you have narcolepsy. This sleep disorder – which causes people to fall asleep suddenly during the day – can worsen on them.

Addiction and Dependence

These medications are controlled substances (schedule IV), but have very low potential for addiction. Studies found that people with addiction had little or no preference for them. So far, no withdrawal problems have been found when they are stopped after prolonged use, but more time is necessary to fully research and uncover potential dependence problems.

Drug Interactions

Diltiazem and other drugs which effect the CYP3A4 enzyme in the liver can increase their levels. You can check for full drug interactions

at this website (please talk with us about the information you find):

reference.medscape.com/drug-interactionchecker

How to store and dispose of medication

- Keep out of the reach of children.
- Store away from heat, direct light and damp places.
- To safely dispose of unwanted pills: Do not pour in the toilet or sink (it will enter the water supply). To prevent children or pets from eating it, mix unwanted pills in a bag with water and inedible trash (such as coffee grounds) and throw in the garbage.

Cost and insurance coverage

They are not available in generic form and may require prior authorization in order for your insurer to pay for it.

There may be coupons at:

www.quviviq.com, www.belsomra.com and www.dayvigo.com.

—Chris Aiken, MD, updated 6/14/2025

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Brand	Quviviq, Dayvigo, Belsomra
Dose range	25-50mg at night for Quviviq 5-20mg at night for Belsomra 5-10mg at night for Dayvigo
Release date	8/3/2014 for Belsomra 12/31/2019 for Dayvigo 1/10/2022 for Quviviq
FDA-approval	Insomnia