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PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# Suvorexant

This information from Lexicomp® explains what you need to know about this medication, including what it's used for, how to take it, its side effects, and when to call your healthcare provider.

## Brand Names: US

Belsomra

## What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat sleep problems.

## What do I need to tell my doctor BEFORE I take this drug?

- If you have an allergy to this drug or any part of this drug.
- If you are allergic to any drugs like this one, any other drugs, foods, or other substances. Tell your doctor about the allergy and what signs you had, like rash; hives; itching; shortness of breath; wheezing; cough; swelling of face, lips, tongue, or throat; or any other signs.
- If you have any of these health problems: Falling asleep when you do not expect to (narcolepsy) or liver problems.
- If you are taking any of these drugs: Another drug to help you sleep, boceprevir, clarithromycin, conivaptan, indinavir, itraconazole, ketoconazole, nefazodone, nelfinavir, posaconazole, ritonavir, saquinavir, telaprevir, or telithromycin.

This is not a list of all drugs or health problems that interact with this drug.

Tell your doctor and pharmacist about all of your drugs (prescription or OTC, natural products, vitamins) and health problems. You must check to make sure

that it is safe for you to take this drug with all of your drugs and health problems. Do not start, stop, or change the dose of any drug without checking with your doctor.

## **What are some things I need to know or do while I take this drug?**

- Tell all of your health care providers that you take this drug. This includes your doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- Avoid driving and doing other tasks or actions that call for you to be alert for at least 8 hours after you take this drug. Avoid these tasks or actions until you feel fully awake.
- You may still feel sleepy the day after you take this drug. This can affect how you drive and may raise the chance of falling asleep while driving. Call your doctor right away if you drive and you feel sleepy during the day.
- This drug may be habit-forming with long-term use.
- When sleep drugs are used nightly for more than a few weeks, they may not work as well to help sleep problems. This is known as tolerance. Only use sleep drugs for a short time. If sleep problems last, call the doctor.
- Avoid alcohol while taking this drug. Do not take this drug if you drank alcohol that evening or before bed.
- Talk with your doctor before you use other drugs and natural products that slow your actions.
- Some people have done certain tasks or actions while they were not fully awake like driving, making and eating food, and having sex. Most of the time, people do not remember doing these things. Tell your doctor if this happens to you.
- If you drink grapefruit juice or eat grapefruit often, talk with your doctor.
- If you are taking digoxin, talk with your doctor. You may need to have your blood work checked more closely while you are taking it with this drug.
- If you are overweight, use this drug with care. You could have more side effects.
- If you are a woman, use this drug with care. You could have more side

effects.

- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or plan on getting pregnant. You will need to talk about the benefits and risks of using this drug while you are pregnant.
- Tell your doctor if you are breast-feeding. You will need to talk about any risks to your baby.

## **What are some side effects that I need to call my doctor about right away?**

**WARNING/CAUTION:** Even though it may be rare, some people may have very bad and sometimes deadly side effects when taking a drug. Tell your doctor or get medical help right away if you have any of the following signs or symptoms that may be related to a very bad side effect:

- Signs of an allergic reaction, like rash; hives; itching; red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin with or without fever; wheezing; tightness in the chest or throat; trouble breathing, swallowing, or talking; unusual hoarseness; or swelling of the mouth, face, lips, tongue, or throat.
- Signs of low mood (depression), thoughts of killing yourself, nervousness, emotional ups and downs, thinking that is not normal, anxiety, or lack of interest in life.
- Feeling confused.
- Change in the way you act.
- Hallucinations (seeing or hearing things that are not there).
- Memory problems or loss.
- Not able to move or speak for up to several minutes while going to sleep or waking up.
- Muscle weakness can happen with this drug. This can last from seconds to a few minutes and can happen both at night and during the day. Call your doctor right away if this happens to you.

## **What are some other side effects of this drug?**

All drugs may cause side effects. However, many people have no side effects or only have minor side effects. Call your doctor or get medical help if any of these

side effects or any other side effects bother you or do not go away:

- Feeling sleepy the next day.
- Headache.

These are not all of the side effects that may occur. If you have questions about side effects, call your doctor. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects.

You may report side effects to your national health agency.

## **How is this drug best taken?**

Use this drug as ordered by your doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

- Take within 30 minutes of bedtime.
- Take with or without food. If taken with or right after a meal, this drug may take longer to work.
- If you still have trouble sleeping after 7 to 10 days, call your doctor.
- Do not take this drug unless you can get a full night's sleep (at least 7 to 8 hours) before you need to be active again.

## **What do I do if I miss a dose?**

- If you take this drug on a regular basis, take a missed dose as soon as you think about it.
- If you will not be able to get a full night's sleep (at least 7 hours) after taking the missed dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your normal time.
- Do not take 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.
- Do not take more than 1 dose of this drug in the same day.
- Many times this drug is taken on an as needed basis. Do not take more often than told by the doctor.

## **How do I store and/or throw out this drug?**

- Store in the original container at room temperature.

- Store in a dry place. Do not store in a bathroom.
- Protect from light.
- Keep all drugs in a safe place. Keep all drugs out of the reach of children and pets.
- Throw away unused or expired drugs. Do not flush down a toilet or pour down a drain unless you are told to do so. Check with your pharmacist if you have questions about the best way to throw out drugs. There may be drug take-back programs in your area.

## **General drug facts**

- If your symptoms or health problems do not get better or if they become worse, call your doctor.
- Do not share your drugs with others and do not take anyone else's drugs.
- Keep a list of all your drugs (prescription, natural products, vitamins, OTC) with you. Give this list to your doctor.
- Talk with the doctor before starting any new drug, including prescription or OTC, natural products, or vitamins.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
- If you think there has been an overdose, call your poison control center or get medical care right away. Be ready to tell or show what was taken, how much, and when it happened.

## **Consumer Information Use and Disclaimer**

This information should not be used to decide whether or not to take this medicine or any other medicine. Only the healthcare provider has the knowledge and training to decide which medicines are right for a specific patient. This information does not endorse any medicine as safe, effective, or approved for treating any patient or health condition. This is only a brief summary of general information about this medicine. It does NOT include all information about the possible uses, directions, warnings, precautions, interactions, adverse effects, or risks that may apply to this medicine. This

information is not specific medical advice and does not replace information you receive from the healthcare provider. You must talk with the healthcare provider for complete information about the risks and benefits of using this medicine.

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If you have any questions, contact a member of your healthcare team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5:00 PM, during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit [www.mskcc.org/pe](http://www.mskcc.org/pe) to search our virtual library.

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