
DOXEPIN (Silenor) Fact Sheet [G]

Bottom Line:

Doxepin may be a good agent to put in your arsenal, particularly for those patients in whom you want to avoid benzodiazepines or Z-drugs. Now that the low-dose (3 and 6 mg) generic version of Silenor is available, price is less of a limitation.

FDA Indications:

Insomnia (sleep maintenance). Generic doxepin (at higher doses) approved for **depression, anxiety disorders**.

Off-Label Uses:

Headache; neuropathic pain; fibromyalgia.

Dosage Forms:

- **Tablets (Silenor, [G]):** 3 mg, 6 mg.
- **Capsules (G):** 10 mg, 25 mg, 50 mg, 75 mg, 100 mg, 150 mg.
- **Oral concentrate (G):** 10 mg/mL.

Dosage Guidance:

Insomnia:

- Silenor: Start, target, and max dose 6 mg QHS, taken within 30 minutes of bedtime. Use 3 mg/day in elderly. Avoid meals within three hours of taking Silenor.
- Doxepin: Start 10 mg capsule, or achieve a lower dose by using the oral concentrate or by opening the 10 mg capsule, dissolving it in a cup of juice, and drinking a portion of the juice.

Monitoring: No routine monitoring recommended unless clinical picture warrants.

Cost: Generic 10 mg and up: \$; Silenor, generic 3 and 6 mg: \$\$\$

Side Effects:

- Most common: Somnolence, nausea, dry mouth, constipation.
- Serious but rare: Orthostasis (more likely at higher doses).
- Pregnancy/breastfeeding: Considered relatively safe.

Mechanism, Pharmacokinetics, and Drug Interactions:

- Tricyclic antidepressant with norepinephrine and serotonin reuptake inhibition and histamine H1 antagonism.
- Metabolized primarily through CYP2C19 and CYP2D6 (also CYP1A2 and CYP2C9 to lesser extent); $t_{1/2}$: 15 hours.
- Clinically significant drug interactions not likely at the low doses used for hypnotic effects.

Clinical Pearls:

- Silenor is a branded version of generic doxepin, but available in lower doses.
- Taking within three hours of eating delays therapeutic effect by up to three hours. For faster onset and to minimize next-day effects, don't take within three hours of a meal.

Fun Fact:

Somaxon Pharmaceuticals, the original but fledgling manufacturer of Silenor, was acquired by Pernix, which hopes to eventually pursue over-the-counter approval.