

## Celexa (citalopram)

**Celexa** is in a class of drugs called Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs; educational handout available) used primarily to treat depression and anxiety and sometimes other mood disorders. This document is to augment information that may have already been provided. If you have questions, please ask the primary provider.

When used, improvement would be expected in weeks to months, not days. Conversely, if there is no benefit in several months, there is very little chance that it will work at the dose given. It should never be used in doses above 20 milligrams daily in seniors. It may interfere with normal sleep patterns and may cause either insomnia or somnolence, so the time of day to take it may vary from person to person.

Celexa has a potential for side effects. Medical conditions and other drugs should be considered first as possible causes. For example, anxiety is a *known* side effect of some asthma drugs, benzodiazepines, steroids, antidepressants, illicit drugs, sleeping pills and many herbals (eg, ma huang, St John's Wort, ginseng, belladonna, guarana).

Counseling may help, but is limited to patients with an ability to retain information (eg, *not useful in dementia*) and those without a major psychiatric disorder (eg, *schizophrenia*) for which counseling would not be effective. It is not intended to be frequent or ongoing, so if no meaningful, lasting improvement is seen within a few months, it should be discontinued.

When patients are started on Celexa, the facility closely tracks outcomes. If residents do not respond favorably or have side effects that may be caused by it, attempts to taper and/or discontinue it *will* occur. Federal Regulations require these efforts at specified time intervals unless there is explicit documentation why doing so would likely put the resident in imminent clinical danger *based on* current documentation. "*Leave well enough alone*" is neither in the patient's best interest nor allowable under Federal Regulations.

Adverse effects (both serious and common) are unusual, but do happen, especially when used with other drugs. Below are potential adverse effects from one of these lists.

### Potential **Serious** Reactions with Celexa Use

Worsening Depression	Extrapyramidal Symptoms (restless, Parkinsons, muscle contractions)	Hyponatremia (Low Sodium)
Mania / Manic Episodes	Low Blood Sugar	Seizures
Serotonin Syndrome	SIADH (Impaired water excretion)	Abnormal / Excess Bleeding
Neuroleptic Malignant Syndrome (mental change, rigid muscles, fever, fast heart rate & breathing, sweating)	EKG / Heart Rhythm Changes (Torsades de pointes; Long QT)	Anaphylaxis/Allergic Reactions
		Withdrawal Symptoms (when abruptly discontinued)

### Common Side Effects associated with Celexa

Nausea / Vomiting	Muscle Weakness	Fever / Cough
Cracked Lips	Diarrhea	Falls / Fractures
Excess Sweating	Decreased Appetite / Weight Loss	Rash
Insomnia or Somnolence	Nervousness / Tremors / Anxiety	Heartburn

More educational materials and information are available on the FDA's website at:

<http://www.fda.gov/downloads/Drugs/DrugSafety/ucm088586.pdf>