

Sleep and Its Importance

Sleep is an important cornerstone to good health. Many restorative functions occur during the night which allow for proper body functioning. Some of the consequences of poor sleep include:

- Weight gain (less than 5 hr/night results in a 73% increase in obesity)
- Increased stress hormone production
- Increased inflammation in the body
- Increased cardiovascular risk (stroke risk increases 75% with 4 hours or less of sleep)
- Increased daytime fatigue and short term memory loss
- Altered thyroid metabolism
- Increased sweet cravings
- Decreased production of human growth hormone (HGH)
- Decreased Melatonin and high evening cortisol levels may increase the risk of breast cancer.

People living in stress produce excess cortisol. This can make it very difficult for a person to relax enough to fall asleep, even though they may be very tired. We call this the “tired and wired” syndrome. Other people who have experienced stress over a long period of time may eventually experience burn out where they have difficulty producing enough cortisol and are tired all day long. More information on the effects of stress and adrenal fatigue are available at www.adrenalfatigue.org.

In order for a person to fall asleep the body’s cortisol level must drop gradually throughout the day to a low bedtime level. Many chemicals must be produced to facilitate the five stages of sleep. Some of these include: tryptophan, 5-HTP, serotonin and melatonin. To make these chemicals, magnesium, vitamin B6 and a methyl donor (i.e. MSM) are required. Most North Americans are severely deficient in magnesium. The following medications can deplete magnesium levels: Ventolin (salbutamol) [asthmatics are generally depleted in magnesium], ACE Inhibitors, hormone supplementation and furosemide. B vitamins are depleted by: digoxin, amitriptyline, ACE Inhibitors, steroids, all types of hormone supplementation (including birth control pills), and more. Vitamin B12 is lowered by metformin and acid lowering medications such as Losec (omeprazole), Prevacid (lansoprazole), Nexium (esomeprazole) and Pariet (rabeprazole). Supplementing with these nutrients can help with sleep, especially when they have been depleted by the prescription drugs listed above.

Treatment Options for Sleep

(*helps fall asleep, # helps stay asleep ♦homeopathic)

***Magnesium Glycinate** Take 1-4 capsules 30 minutes before bed.

It is important to use the glycinate salt. This form of magnesium relaxes all muscle tissue to promote sleep and helps the body form its own sleep chemicals. It also helps with restless leg syndrome and muscle cramping.

***5-HTP** Take 25-300 mg at bed.

This is the precursor for serotonin which is needed for regulation of sleep, satiety (feeling full) and pain tolerance. Stress leads to a significant loss of serotonin and when levels are low it leads to “carb” cravings.

the possibilities are endless...

#Melatonin Sustained Release Take 0.5-6 mg at bed.

This is especially helpful if you are able to fall asleep but can't stay asleep. Once you are sleeping well throughout the night and are supplementing with a B complex and magnesium, then you can begin to decrease the dosage. Chronic use of benzodiazepines (ie. lorazepam) will deplete melatonin. 1.5 mg at bed added to the prescription medication will prevent middle of the night waking. A sublingual form of melatonin is also available to help initiate sleep.

***#Neurexan** Taken three times over the evening.

This is a homeopathic product taken three times over the evening to help calm cortisol levels and promote a proper sleep cycle (example: 8 PM, 9PM and 10PM). If insomnia persists, one tablet can be dissolved in the mouth every 15 minutes for three additional doses during the night.

***#Benesom** Take one tablet one hour before bed.

This combination of melatonin, passion flower and LactiumPure help with the formation of GABA to promote a restful relaxed state to relieve occasional sleeplessness.

***#Seditol** Take 365- 730 mg at bedtime.

This is derived from an extract of the magnolia and ziziphus plants. It helps to normalize cortisol and DHEA levels as well as decreasing stress related fat deposition and increased appetite. It helps calm the wired mind to fall asleep.

***#Relora** Take 250 mg once to three times daily. (Daytime only – before 4 pm)

This is an extract of magnolia and phellodendron plants. It is used during the day to calm excess cortisol production to prevent elevated levels at night. It is non-sedating and actually increases energy while decreasing anxiety and creating calm.

***#L-Theanine** Take 200 mg at night.

An amino acid found in green tea. It increases dopamine levels in the brain and helps with restlessness and insomnia. It calms the mind while increasing alpha brain wave activity to promote a deeper sleep.

***#Somnolin** Take two tablets before bed.

This is a combination of theanine, 5HTP, and B vitamins which promotes deep sleep for people who are unable to stay asleep.

***#Pasconal** Take 30-40 drops diluted in water at bedtime.

This homeopathic remedy works over time to calm cortisol levels, reduces mental and physical exhaustion, nervousness, restlessness and is used as a sleep remedy.

***#Sleep Tonight** Take one or two capsules at bedtime.

This herbal blend includes: theanine, magnolia, ashwagandha, phosphatidylcholine and more. The effect improves over several nights' treatment. It will help a person fall asleep and stay asleep.

***Serenagen** Take one or two tablets at bedtime (may also use morning and afternoon for daytime relaxation).

Serenagen helps to calm the tired/wired mind to fall asleep. This can also be used during the day to calm the active mind.

***#Orthosleep** Take one or two capsules before bedtime or as directed. This product helps improve overall sleep.

#AdrenaSmart - Take one or two capsules midday with a snack.

***Combinations of these medications may be required for proper sleep. Ask the pharmacist to advise you on which options may be best for you.

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