



Getting a Good Night's Sleep

Natural Solutions to Insomnia

If you've counted sheep as you laid wide awake in the wee hours of the night, unable to sleep, you aren't alone. It has been estimated that fifty million people in the U.S. suffer from sleep disorders, which include insomnia, the inability to either fall asleep or to remain asleep through the night. Fortunately, there are some fairly simple answers for most cases of insomnia. For starters, sleep patterns are habitual, so one needs to train the body by going to bed at a regular time until a sleep habit can be formed. This generally takes about 3-4 weeks.

The ability to fall asleep is partially governed by a hormone called melatonin produced by the pineal gland. Melatonin is produced from serotonin, a neurotransmitter that acts as a mood elevator in the brain. Serotonin is converted to melatonin by the pituitary gland in the absence of light. So, staying up watching TV or working on a computer is not helpful for insomnia. (You're staring at a light-source which is inhibiting the production of melatonin). So, decide on a regular bedtime, turn out the lights and go to bed at that time to help train your body into a regular sleep pattern.

Serotonin is produced from the amino acid tryptophan, along with vitamin B₆ and zinc. Since serotonin levels are directly influenced by tryptophan levels in the brain, increased intake of tryptophan can help induce sleep. **5-HTP Power** provides tryptophan (in the form of 5-HTP or Hydroxytryptophan), zinc and B₆, thus helping to increase serotonin synthesis.

Melatonin is also available as a supplement. Melatonin Extra can be taken shortly before going to bed to help train the body to go to sleep at the desired time. This can be especially helpful for jet lag or insomnia brought on by irregular sleep schedules.

Emotional stress and tension, fear, excitement, anxiety and worry can all affect sleep. When the mind keeps going over problems and stresses again and again, sleep can become a problem. If worry over daily tasks is keeping you awake, you may want to get some instruction on meditation. Meditation can do wonders for calming the nerves and helping with sleep.

Nervine herbs, which promote relaxation and relax muscle tension, can help to release those "uptight" feelings and promote sleep. Hops is a mild sedative and can help relax both the body and the mind to promote better sleep. Scullcap is a good herb for excess mental chatter, as it helps to quiet the mind. Other herbs that help the body relax and promote sleep include: valerian, passion flower, and kava kava. Three of these herbs, hops, valerian, and passion flower, are found in the Herbal Sleep formula. Take these herbs about 1-2 hours before bedtime. Dim the lights, read a good book, or do meditation or other relax-

ing activities to allow the body to unwind so it is easier to fall asleep.

Closely related to nervous tension, anxiety may also produce insomnia. If you have "panic attacks," cardiac stress (high blood pressure, rapid or irregular heartbeat), chronic nervousness or tension headaches coupled with insomnia, then anxiety may be the cause. In this case, nutrients such as **Vitamin C, B Complex,** and **Magnesium** can help. **Nutri-Calm**, an anti-stress vitamin supplement in a base of nervine and adaptogenic herbs may be particularly helpful.

Liver toxicity, or an excess of hot or "yang" energy in the liver, is a common cause of insomnia. This creates "night hawk" behavior where the person gets energized in the evening and can't relax and go to sleep. In the morning, the individual feels "groggy" and "hung over" and often has a difficult time getting out of bed. Headaches are also common with this profile. Treat this type of insomnia with herbs to cleanse the liver and reduce liver "heat," such as **Enviro-Detox or Liver Balance**.

When a person is able to go to sleep, but their sleep is disturbed by frequent tossing and turning, restless dreams, waking often needing to urinate, or waking up after a few hours and being unable to get back to sleep, the problem may be exhausted adrenals. Such a person is often tired during the day, but unable to sleep peacefully at night. Other symptoms of adrenal exhaustion include: dark circles under the eyes, quivering tongue, pulsing pupils, mental confusion and being excessively emotionally sensitive.

Adrenal exhaustion suggests a need for adaptagens and/or adrenal tonics. **Nervous Fatigue Formula** is generally a very effective formula for this type of insomnia. It is used in Chinese medicine for depleted "fire" or what we would call "burnout" in the West. It not only aids insomnia, it also helps manage heart palpitations, restless thoughts, night sweats, mental confusion and emotional "edginess." Most people suffering from this type of insomnia experience improved sleep and energy levels within two to four days on this formula. Adrenal Support or AdaptaMax can also be helpful for this type of insomnia.

It also helps to avoid eating heavy meals before bedtime, although a small snack of a high protein food like jerky, cottage cheese, or nut butter at bedtime can help to stabilize blood sugar levels during sleep and improve the quality of rest.

Natural therapy for insomnia involves identifying the underlying causes and selecting appropriate remedies to correct those causes. Consult with a qualified herb specialist or natural health consultant for more specific recommendations.

For Educational Purposes Only

Seek appropriate professional assistance for all serious health problems. Handout prepared by Tree of Light Publishing
P.O. Box 911239, St. George, UT 84791 (www.treelite.com)
©2004 May be reproduced provided it is not altered in any way.

Distributed by: