

Insomnia

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One of the most important factors in achieving optimal health is experiencing sound sleep on a daily basis. A good night's rest is vital to your health. Without adequate restorative sleep, regeneration is not possible from the day's activity and your energy is not replenished. Sleep is directly affected by two major factors: your home environment and what you have done or experienced throughout the day. Your body needs down time to heal itself, and create homeostasis. If insomnia lasts for long stretches of time, it can negatively affect health and compromise the immune and nervous systems. Recent studies have found that natural killer cell activity (immune defenses) is lowered in people deprived of sleep as well as linked to a higher incidence of depression.

Insomnia is a symptom not an ailment, which means you will need to find the underlying cause to why you are not sleeping well. There is no single answer since everyone is different, having very with individual factors. The number one factor known to disturb sleep is stress. Nervous tension, mental exhaustion, worry, anxiety, depression and relationship problems, even environmental stress, are all possible reasons that may be influencing poor sleep.

Another factor is a high body temperature. Normally, the body temperature becomes cooler as metabolism and digestion slow down. A cooler body temperature is associated with deep sleep. I find by keeping our bedroom window cracked promotes a

good night sleep by allowing a fresh air exchange and a cooler temperature. Recent studies show that the amount of oxygen in the air we breathe is much lower than it used to be, approximately 12 – 19% depending where you live. What is surprising to learn is that many bedrooms only consist of 6% oxygen. Because the lungs eliminate the majority of your body's metabolic waste, it is important to exchange the air in your home, and more importantly your bedroom, on a daily basis. Oxygen is a necessity for good sleep and good health. If you live in a warmer climate, and utilize an air conditioner, keep in mind while they do cool the air, they do not completely clean it. Be sure to change your filters routinely as they can harbor bacteria and mold.

A good night's slumber also restores your energy field. It is a good practice to keep this energy field clear of unnecessary electrical devices. This includes the electric clock at your bedside, lamps, or the computer you leave on in your bedroom. All electrical appliances emit an electromagnetic field (EMF) that extends for several feet beyond their physical location. When these EMF fields cross with your energetic field, it creates interference and can impede healing, energy restoration, etc. I personally use a battery operated alarm clock, and unplug my reading lamp at night.

Holistic Solutions

Essential oils are commonly used for insomnia because they have relaxing and sedative characteristics. Many of these oils work by stimulating production of serotonin (a naturally occurring brain chemical that helps induce sleep) and calming the nervous system. Lavender and Roman chamomile are by far the most popular essential oils for relaxation and encouraging sleep and are used routinely in hospitals in the U.K. for this

purpose. Others are bergamot, cedarwood, chamomile, clary sage, cypress, frankincense, helichrysm, hyssop, lavender, laurel, lemongrass, marjoram, neroli, orange, petitgrain, rose, sandalwood, spikenard, and ylang ylang.

Inhalation of essential oils prior to going to bed, and diffusing the oils again while you sleep, can be extremely effective. Bedrooms are a convenient and obvious place in which to use an aromatherapy diffuser for insomnia, which is the most effective method for general indirect inhalation. These small devices can be connected to automatic timers to intermittently go on while you are asleep. Place them on the far side of the bedroom since they are electric. Alternatively, a few drops of this essential oil blend can be sprinkled on the bed linens, or made into a room spray.

Making Z's Sleep Blend

7 parts Lavender essential oil

1 part Sweet Marjoram essential oil

1 part Roman Chamomile essential oil

1 part Sweet Orange or Bergamot essential oil

Mix the essential oils in an amber glass bottle. Label. To make a room spray: add 20 drops (or double this recipe) and add to 4 ounces of distilled water. Shake well before each use and mist into the air.

Besides restoration, your body also eliminates toxins during sleep. Therefore eating a heavy meal or large amounts of liquid right before bedtime is virtually a guarantee of disturbed sleep. Try to eat at least 2 – 3 hours prior to retiring to bed at night. Eat more melatonin-rich foods, such as oats, sweet corn, rice, barley, ginger, tomatoes and bananas for dinner.

The contemporary science of chronobiology recognizes natural human rhythms and confirms the body indeed follows a specific function and energy cycle every 21 to 24 hour period. Your body has an internal biorhythm and is attuned to the movement of the sun and moon. Every 24 hours, at a predetermined time, a surge of energy naturally courses through each body organ and correlates to the meridian that governs it. Therefore, if you find yourself waking at a specific time each night, it may be related to the organ's energy, known as the Circadian Cycle. According to these cycles, and Oriental medicine, there is a prime time for the maximum energy chi-flow for each major organ meridian.

Relaxation and breathing exercises, as well as listening to a soothing CD of nature sounds or relaxation tape before bed can be helpful as can reading, prayer, meditation or a warm aromatic bath to get your body back into its natural sleep rhythm. Create a pleasurable routine that works for you. Lastly, sleep in the nude or wear natural sleepwear made of silk, cotton, hemp or linen, as synthetic fibers accumulate static electricity, interfere with your body's energy and does not allow your skin to breathe.

Conclusion

The quality of your sleep is more important than you probably realized, and even though we all lead very hectic lives it is worth the effort to promote the best sleep possible using the recommendations shared with you here. A refreshed, restorative, uninterrupted sleep is not a just a dream. Look for the underlying cause and make a few positive changes to reap its peaceful reward. Be well.