

INSOMNIA

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Nutritional balancing science focuses on balancing chemistry rather than just correcting symptoms. Insomnia, however, is so important that it deserves special attention. Sleep is extremely essential for all healing!

Hair mineral analysis can often assist one to find and correct common causes of insomnia. This article will also discuss other natural methods to assist sleep. Let us begin with simple causes for insomnia.

CALCIUM, MAGNESIUM, ZINC AND INSOMNIA

Calcium, magnesium and zinc are among the “sedative” elements. They are needed to relax the muscles and nervous system. Difficulty sleeping can arise when the hair tissue levels of these minerals are low. This can cause muscle tension and irritability that can interfere with rest and sleep.

This can also occur if the hair calcium and magnesium levels are elevated above the ideal, but the levels are low in relation to sodium and potassium. This is called a four highs pattern and is associated with a lot of stress, and perhaps muscle tension as well.

BIUNAVAILABLE CALCIUM AND MAGNESIUM

Insomnia is also common when calcium and/or magnesium become biounavailable. This occurs especially in slow oxidizers who have a hair tissue calcium level above about 80 mg% and/or a hair magnesium level above about 12 mg%. This indicates a buildup of calcium and magnesium in the soft tissues in many cases. However, the blood and certain other tissues can be low in available calcium and magnesium at the same time. This can give rise to muscle tension, irritability and difficulty sleeping.

Serum levels of calcium and magnesium, by the way, rarely vary much and are less indicative of deficiency or excess than tissue or hair levels.

Thus it is always worth a try to give calcium and magnesium, in particular, with dinner and before bed. One can also take more in the night if one wakes up and cannot fall back asleep. They are quite safe used this way. The dosage can be quite high, as one can take over 1000 mg of calcium and 6-700 mg of magnesium daily with no adverse effects in many instances. Children usually need somewhat less, but not necessarily a lot less than this amount depending upon their size and weight. Note that it will take 15-30 minutes for a calcium tablet to dissolve in the stomach. For a more rapid effect during the night, at times it is best to chew or grind up a tablet, or use a liquid preparation.

Those with biounavailable calcium and magnesium often also have a *copper imbalance* that contributes to their insomnia. This is discussed below.

COPPER AND INSOMNIA

A hallmark of copper imbalance is insomnia. Copper has a stimulating effect on the brain, causes the mind to race, and it can also excite the emotions. High-copper individuals often stay up late and have difficulty falling or staying asleep. Insomnia before the menstrual period can often be due to elevated copper, as this tends to occur just before the menstrual period in young women. Indicators for copper imbalance on a properly performed hair mineral analysis include a copper level greater than 2.5 mg%, copper less than 1 mg%, sodium/potassium ratio less than 2.0, sodium/potassium ratio greater than 6, a calcium level greater than about 70 mg%, a potassium level less than about 4 mg%, elevated mercury or a zinc level less than 13 mg%.

Improving the copper balance may take a few weeks to a few months or more, especially if other nutritional imbalances are present. For this reason, other remedies may be needed for a while until the copper is brought into a better balance. Remedies that specifically affect copper include taking zinc, vitamin B6, vitamin C, manganese, GB-3 and perhaps also molybdenum. All of these may help lower a very high copper in some people. However, do not continue these if they are not effective, as they can also unbalance the body chemistry if taken for extended periods of time. To read more about copper, read the article on this website entitled [Copper Toxicity Syndrome](#).

INSOMNIA AND SYMPATHETIC DOMINANCE

The sympathetic nervous system causes us to be very alert and ready to respond to danger. Some people have difficulty “turning off” this system in the evening.

For these individual, the above remedies will often be helpful. Also, they need to reduce physical or intellectual stimulation and activities after about 6 PM, ideally. Relaxation exercises, deep breathing, meditation, or soft music before bed may be very helpful. Keep computers off after dinner and do not engage in exercise or any stimulating activity at night. A warm bath, a little yoga, foot reflexology, a short massage of your shoulders or back, use of a chi machine or a very gentle walk might help a lot as well.

TOXIC METALS AND SLEEP

Mercury, lead, cadmium, arsenic and many other toxins can impair sleep in some people. These are quite common in the population. They may or may not be revealed on blood, urine or hair tests. A nutritional balancing program will slowly, gently and safely remove them from the body.

STIMULANTS AND INSOMNIA

Some people have difficulty sleeping if they use stimulants such as caffeine or even sugar. Many find that eating sweets or chocolate at dinner or afterwards interferes with their sleep. While alcohol relaxes some people, in others it, too, will interfere with rest and sleep. Medical or OTC drugs can occasionally cause insomnia by various mechanisms. Even certain vitamin supplements, can be somewhat stimulating and can interfere with rest. These include kelp, B-complex vitamins, adrenal and thyroid glandulars or herbs, too much vitamin C or E, and possibly others.

FEARS, WORRY, ANGER AND OTHER EMOTIONAL CAUSES

We have all been up late worrying about someone or something now and then. Sleep impairment may also occur because one is processing too much emotional or mental data.

Unresolved conflicts or issues can also keep a person awake. For this reason, it is always best, if it is not too late at night, to make peace with partners, children and others in the house to assure a better night's sleep.

OTHER REASONS FOR INSOMNIA

These include other factors that are discussed below under remedies for insomnia. They include noise or light in the bedroom, EMFs from electrical appliances, especially any located near your head, improper mattress, feeling hot or cold, coughs, inability to breathe well, or anything else that prevents one from relaxing completely.

Going to bed late sometimes keeps a person awake because the sympathetic nervous system kicks in powerfully after supper to keep one up. Then when it is time to go to bed, one cannot relax. The answer is to always go to bed early, and go to bed even earlier if you are tired.

MENTAL AND SPIRITUAL REASONS FOR SLEEP LOSS

Mental and spiritual changes going on in a person may also cause sleep loss. I will just give one example. Some people actually travel in their finer body at night to converse with others, for healing, for instructions and for many other reasons, even just social calls. This is sometimes termed *astral travel*. It is a reality and has been written about extensively in some books.

It can cause disturbed sleep, or may cause odd dreams. It is also a cause of fatigue in the morning, regardless of whether one actually slept or not. It is as if one was very busy all night, so one wakes up tired the next day.

This is a rather common phenomena in certain individuals. They must adapt by getting more sleep and rest, and perhaps also taking a nap during the day. Otherwise they will always be exhausted and often depressed and ill.

DIETARY FACTORS

Stimulants in the diet have been mentioned above. Not eating enough can also impair sleep in some people. While a heavy dinner may impair sleep, a light dinner or even an evening snack with protein can enhance sleep, especially for those who wake up at night. Warm milk is a folk remedy for sleep, containing calcium, tryptophan and a little protein.

Certain foods such as turkey and milk contain higher amounts of tryptophan, an amino acid that may assist sleep. This can account for drowsiness after a turkey dinner. Other foods might keep one awake. Some people are hypoglycemic and must eat some protein or fat in the evening. Otherwise, blood sugar fluctuations in the middle of the night may wake them up.

Drinking too much liquid after about 4-5 PM may cause one to be up urinating during the night. It is best to drink the bulk of one's 3 quarts of spring or distilled water each day in the morning and afternoon, rather than at night.

HINTS FOR BETTER SLEEP

Here are simple ways to improve your sleep and rest:

1. Avoid all stimulants, especially near bedtime. This includes caffeine, loud music, difficult work, exercise in most cases, and all other stimulating activities and even thoughts.

2. Stretch, meditate, relax and read a spiritually uplifting book or listen to a spiritually uplifting tape, movie or other source of information before bed each night.

Many times this is a double blessing. Not only are you uplifted spiritually, but you will sleep better. There is no shortage of material to choose from, including the bible and so many uplifting movies, books, CDs and more. Do not stay up late with this, however. Start it early so you can go to bed early.

3. Go to bed earlier. Many people claim they must go to be late to fall asleep. However, in my experience, if you will go to bed much earlier, say 8 PM, you will sleep even longer in most cases.

What happens is that if you stay up past an early hour, you stimulate your sympathetic nervous system in order to sustain you in an awake condition. This stimulation, however, then prevents or retards the resting process when you finally decide to go to bed. If you can completely avoid the sympathetic "kick" late in the day or early evening, you will sleep much longer and deeper.

If needed, set an alarm to go off at 8 PM or even earlier to remind you stop all activities and prepare for bed.

4. Saunas or other physical methods. Taking a sauna early, say at 8 PM, helps many people relax. Do not overdo, however. Often just ten to twenty minutes are needed.

A warm bath or shower helps some people relax, wash away the day's cares and rest better. Standing in the back of the shower and running cold water on the legs and feet for about 3 minutes is an old water cure method to assist sleep. This draws blood out of the head and into the lower body. Withdrawing blood from the head facilitates sleep.

Foot reflexology. Another excellent physical method is to rub the feet vigorously for 5 minutes or so on each foot, especially the big toes. There is actually a "sleep point" that corresponds to the pituitary gland. It is located on the pad of the large toe, near the middle of the big toe, slightly toward the other toes (lateral side). It will often be tender in anyone who is stressed. By rubbing the bottom of the big toe you will often find a tender spot. Keep rubbing it for a few minutes and often the tenderness will diminish and this may facilitate better sleep.

5. Make sure your sleeping area is dark, quiet, smells good, is warm enough and peaceful. Fresh air also helps many people sleep better. These are very important for some sensitive individuals. It is worth installing blackout blinds or curtains, and to use earplugs and even eye covering if this helps you sleep. Do not be embarrassed about this. The silicone ear plugs work much better than the foam rubber ones.

6. Certain scents may help sleep in some people. You may have to experiment with this using essential oils or other methods. Beware that many essential oils, however, are somewhat toxic and can be stimulating, so use very, very little at a time. Perhaps one drop placed under your nose of a very soothing aroma may relax some people.

7. Traveling is often the hardest for sleep and most people need even more rest when traveling. Here are a few tips: Bring a familiar cassette tape to listen to, and plan on using earplugs and maybe eye covering to really darken the room. Some people like to bring their own favorite pillow as well. Ask for a different hotel room if your room seems noisy, dirty or smelly. For unavoidable noise, some people use a white noise generator to drown out ambient noise or even just turn on a radio or tv to drown out ambient noise. Also, unplugging clock radios and other electrical devices that are next to the bed occasionally is helpful.

8. One's attitude can also affect insomnia. Do not take problems and worries to bed with you. Each evening, think and say, "This day is now complete. I turn everything over and release the body this day".

OTHER REMEDIES

We already discussed the use of calcium, magnesium, molybdenum, zinc, and vitamin B6. Other remedies that may help include 5-HTP (5-hydroxytryptophan). Tryptophan is found naturally in foods such as milk and turkey.

Melatonin, the pineal gland hormone, helps some people. I suggest using this remedy only when needed, as it can be a bit toxic in some cases.

Chamomile tea or other relaxing tea blends sold in health food stores may also be extremely helpful near bedtime. You may also keep some of the teas at your bedside if you wake up and cannot go back to sleep in the middle of the night. Homeopathic remedies available at health stores may also help with insomnia and are usually safe.

Medical drugs for sleep should be used only as a last resort, as they are somewhat toxic and can be habit-forming. They also may cause more of a drug-induced sleep that is actually not as restful.

SLEEP APNEA

This is commonly due to silent 'side effects' of medical or over-the-counter drugs, or to allergies, especially food allergies to wheat, dairy and gluten. Being overweight is another common cause. Correct these and most sleep apnea improves or goes away completely.

WAKING UP TIRED

Some people seem to sleep many hours, but do not wake up refreshed. This can be the effect of certain toxins on the brain. They may allow sleep, but impair the rhythm of deep and superficial sleep that characterizes a great night's rest. This is an important but subtle point about sleep. It explains why some people seem to get along on less sleep while others need many more hours of sleep to feel rested.

In other cases, this problem is due to an uncomfortable mattress that should be replaced. In still other cases, one is not refreshed because the problem is really adrenal burnout or some other condition. In these cases, just sleeping is not enough to recharge and refresh the body. A nutritional balancing program is needed to balance and correct the entire body chemistry.