

Sleep & Wellness

Presenter: Dr. Morgan Schuster ND
For: Heart of Wellness in Tumwater, WA
www.heartofwellness.org

What qualifies as insomnia or a sleep disorder: Ask yourself are you... *not feeling rested upon waking in the morning? Do you wake-up frequently throughout the night?*

1. Sleep quality
 - a. Lack of adequate sleep/interrupted sleep
2. Different stages of sleep
 - a. Lack of sleep = < 9 hrs of sleep
3. Sleep goal is 8-9 hours, uninterrupted

Getting the right diagnosis may include getting a sleep study.

- Different options for sleep study include at a sleep center or at home.

Why sleep is so important:

- Improves energy throughout the day
- Improves mood
- Improves immune system function
- Hormonal regulation
- Detoxification support: sleep is the body's time to reset and clean house

Why do sleep issues happen? Likely biological, neurobehavioral and psychological hyperarousal. There may also be a genetic component.

Reasons for insomnia or difficulty falling or staying asleep:

1. Mood & Hormonal changes
 - a. Menopause- body temperature does not “dip down” like it should so there is more difficulty falling and staying asleep
 - b. Hormonal balance
2. Sleep Apnea: probable cause in 10-20% of people who present with insomnia. *This is diagnosed by a sleep study.*
3. GERD (gastro-esophageal reflux) can present with insomnia and night time awakenings.
4. Chronic pain
5. Restless leg syndrome- muscle pain and twitching when lying down to bed
6. Circadian rhythm issues

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7. Blood sugar irregularities
8. Cortisol, stress and adrenals
9. Other reasons...

Other reasons and underlying causes:

- Gut microbiome
- Medication side effects
- Caffeine overuse: avoid in the afternoon (6-8 hrs before bed)
- Lack of physical exercise
- Lack of adequate nutrition
- Neurotransmitters

What you can do if uncertain the reason for your insomnia or sleep issues?

Keep a **sleep log** (see link below) and provide it to your medical practitioner.

What you can do to help get more Zzzz:

1. Physical Exercise during the day
 - a. Minimum of 20 minutes per day
 - b. Don't exercise vigorously after dinner; eating a heavy meal prior to bed can lead to a bad night's sleep.
2. Meeting nutrition needs
 - a. Foods that help promote sleep (reference neurotransmitters)
 - b. Protein (turkey and tryptophan) and meet protein goals for the day.
 - c. Other foods to help promote sleep: Tart cherry juice, oatmeal (serotonin) as well as others
3. Sleep hygiene
 - a. Sleep routines: start winding-down 1 hr before bed.
 - b. *Remember those circadian rhythms?* Try to go to bed and wake-up at the SAME time every day
 - c. Your bed should only be used for sleep and romance -- not reading or television
 - d. Your sleep environment should be completely dark and cool (around 60 degrees).
 - e. Avoid naps
4. Avoiding electronics:
 - a. 1-2 hours before bed-- Allows for natural melatonin production.
5. Warm (not hot) showers or baths.

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- a. Warm your middle -- this raises your core temperature and triggers proper chemistry for sleep; can use a hot water bottle, heating pad or warm body can do the trick
- 6. Stress reduction techniques to help one fall asleep:
 - a. Write down your worries -- one hour before bed, write down the things that are making you feel anxious or worried and make plans for what you might do the next day to reduce your worry; this will free up your mind and energy to move into deep and restful sleep
 - b. CBT (cognitive behavioral therapy): works as well as pharmacotherapy and has lasting potential even 1-2 years after discontinuation of therapy.
 - c. Visualizations or story telling.
 - d. Gratitude prayer or spiritual practice
 - e. Mindfulness meditation, Transcendental Medicine, Biofeedback and Progressive
 - f. Muscle Relaxation Techniques

Remember: *When changing a sleep behavior or pattern give yourself 7-10 days of trying it out before giving up. It takes time for your body to learn a new routine. Be gentle.*

Common sleep aids (do's and don't):

- Supplements/Medications

- Avoid alcohol
- Magnesium: 200-400mg at night
- Melatonin: It's effect depends on time administered (see below). It's not as safe if you have insulin resistance or trying to conceive as it may cause a lowered sperm count.

1. Administer very low dose (under 3 mg) four to five hours prior to bed for delayed sleep phase/circadian rhythm disorders (usually occurs in teens)
2. Administer high dose (3-5 mg) one hr before bed for sleep initiation issues with adults or adults with interrupted sleep.

- Avoid medications: off-label use of antihistamines: (i.e. Benadryl or diphenhydramine) certain allergy medication (that can cause dependence and disrupt normal sleep rhythms and architecture), stimulants, cold medications and headache medicine that contains caffeine (such as Floricet)
- Certain herbs that help sleep: passionflower, valerian, catnip, chamomile and others (discuss with your provider to make sure they are safe for you)

- Certain hormones: such as progesterone may be a safe and good option for you to discuss with your provider
- Neurotransmitter support (speak with your provider)
- Medications: *things to know...*
 - Agents for sleep initiation: zaleplon, zolpidem, ramelteon
 - Agents for sleep maintenance: zolpidem ER, eszopiclone, doxepin, or gabapentin (off label)
 - Trazodone and mirtazapine also have uncertain benefits but are clinically helpful for some.

Resources and Links To Support Sleep:

1. This is one possible site for online CBT <https://www.sleepio.com>
2. Melatonin associated with impaired glucose tolerance
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4173928/>
3. American Academy of Sleep Medicine
4. This site below has easy to understand information on sleep related disorders and links to videos explaining sleep hygiene. You can also download sleep logs, get info.
SleepEducation.org Website
5. Review on use of mindfulness and meditation for insomnia.
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26390335>
6. YouTube sleep meditations or guided imagery for sleep.