



# Take Back The Night

## Can't sleep? *You're not alone.*

According to the National Sleep Foundation (NSF), almost six out of 10 report having insomnia and sleep problems at least a few nights a week. In Canada, an estimated 3.3 million Canadians aged 15 or older, or about one in every seven, have problems going to sleep or staying asleep, and thus are considered to have insomnia, according to a Canadian study. Based on data from the 2002 Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS), just under one-fifth (18%) of these people average less than five hours of sleep a night.

Insomnia is defined as an inability to fall asleep or remain asleep long enough to feel rested, especially when the problem persists over time. Insomnia can be acute and periodic, or it may develop into a chronic health concern threatening your quality of life, health and relationships.

## Insomnia: A major health and safety concern of today

Most everyone agrees that it is important for a healthy body and mind to get a good night's sleep most nights. Sadly, however, in our modern age quality sleep is hard to come by and a growing number of people are considered insomniacs. If we burn a candle at both ends, the candle doesn't last as long. And so it is with lack of sleep: if we deny ourselves appropriate time for quality sleep our health, productivity, and performance suffer. Lack of sleep, or insomnia, is now considered a safety hazard for driving a vehicle or operating equipment, and contributes to many of today's chronic diseases such as heart disease, diabetes and psychotic disorders. Fact is, we would die sooner from going without sleep than going without food. It takes two weeks to starve, but only 11 days to die from sleep deprivation.

## Circadian Rhythm: The ancient rhythm of sleep

When it comes to sleep, we are governed by the ancient, natural rhythms of planet earth and the sun and moon. This ancient rhythm of sunsets is called by scientists the Circadian Rhythm. It works like this: when the sun sets at the end of the day and darkness descends, our pineal gland releases the sleep hormone melatonin, which makes us drowsy and prepares our mind and body for sleep. Come morning, with the rising of the sun and daylight, levels of the hormone cortisol (a stress hormone released from the adrenal glands) rises to wake us from our slumber. All this works in perfect harmony with nature and has ever since we humans arrived. But modern life is disrupting the natural rhythm of wake and sleep: shift work, travel across time zones, bright lights, illuminated screens of TV, computers, smartphones and tablets, are keeping us humans busy and entertained long into the evening hours. Unlike our ancestors who worked and slept according to the ancient circadian rhythms of the sun and moon, the modern lifestyle has us overly stimulated, stressed, restless and burning the candle at both ends — we are paying the price for our lack of sleep with our health.



## 5 Stages of Sleep

Quality, restorative sleep occurs in five general main stages: Stages 1-4, known as non-rapid eye movement (NREM), and Stage 5, known as rapid eye movement (REM). Generally, Stages 2-4 of NREM is when we enter deep wave or Delta Sleep stages; this is when much of the healing and restorative processes take place. A disruption in the stages and cycles, especially NREM deep Delta Sleep Stages 3-4 will not produce the revitalizing rest we need for alert

*(continued of next 2)*

# 5 Stages of Sleep

1

Non-Rapid Eye Movement (NREM)  
Light Transitional Sleep Begins  
Muscles Slow

2

Heart Rate Decrease  
Breathing Slows  
Body Temp. Cools

3

Deep Delta Sleep Begins  
Brain Waves Become Slower,  
Steadier with Bursts of Activity  
Muscles Activity Slows Further

4

Deep Delta Sleep Enhances  
Repair Functions At Work  
Immune System Maintenance

5

Rapid Eye Movement (REM) Begins  
Memory, Learning, and Recall  
Organization Starts

cognitive function and will disrupt repair and healing activity. The effects of sleep deprivation are thus: cognitive impairment equal to that of alcohol intoxication; elevated stress hormone levels which affect all body systems; impaired immune response; and elevated insulin levels with a coinciding reduction in human growth hormone (HGH) production. In one study, researchers took healthy young men with no risk factors and turned them into pre-diabetics simply by depriving them of restorative sleep for one week. Studies show that getting less than five hours of sleep a night increases your risk of death 15% from any cause. Too much sleep also carries health risks, so experts say strive for 7.5 to 8 hours of sleep per night.



## All-natural Sleep Clinic

- Establish a regular sleeping and waking routine. Strive for 7.5 to 8 hours per night.
- Create a sleep sanctuary. Turn your bedroom into a sleep-only room where electronics and other distractions are banished. Keep the room temperature cool to promote sleep.
- Have a regular eating schedule and eat a light dinner. Avoid eating two to three hours before bedtime and don't eat high-carbohydrate foods. Eating too close to bedtime can alter growth hormone production by raising insulin levels.
- If you need to snack before bed, eat protein high in the amino acid tryptophan to stimulate the release of the neurotransmitter serotonin. Whey protein is an excellent source.
- Kill the lights. Sleep in as much darkness as possible. Light on your skin sends messages to the brain to lower melatonin release. Even clock radio illumination can cause this.
- Ditch the smartphone, computer screen, LCD T.V. and tablet from the bedroom. These emanate "blue light" which disrupts melatonin production and interferes with the stages of sleep. These devices, in many cases, also require Wifi signals which are thought to disrupt brainwaves and sleep cycles.
- Limit your consumption of coffee, tea, cola drinks and chocolate since these contain caffeine and sugar.
- Avoid alcohol and sleeping medications before bed since these disrupt the stages and cycle of sleep.
- Get physical after dinner with a brisk walk. However, avoid strenuous activity within two hours of bedtime.
- Take a warm evening bath. Use Epsom salts which are high in magnesium.
- End your day on a low key: Avoid stressful events, TV shows, movies, balancing the cheque book, heated discussions, etc. Meditate, be thankful, or pray. Prepare the mind/body/soul for sleep.
- Take nutritional supplements and herbals that promote sleep.



# Sleep Enhancement Naturally



## Melatonin Extra

**USE** — Melatonin is the sleep hormone secreted by the pineal gland in response to the circadian rhythm of the light-dark cycle of night and day. Melatonin basically tells the body it's time to sleep. For those finding it hard to enter sleep such as shift workers, time-zone travelers and those with sleep disorders, melatonin helps to reduce the time it takes to fall asleep and re-sets the body's own sleep-wake 'clock' (circadian rhythm).

### BENEFITS:

- Non-bovine melatonin hormone with vitamin E, ginkgo and Siberian ginseng.
- Melatonin helps increase the total sleep time (aspect of sleep quality) in people suffering from sleep restriction or altered sleep schedule, e.g. shift-work and jet lag.



## HVP

**USE** — HVP is a natural sedative and tranquilizing formula containing three classic herbs: hops, valerian, and passion flower. HVP supports restful sleep through its soothing and calming properties.

### BENEFITS:

- Traditional herbal sedative combination.
- Valerian has traditionally been used as a sleep aid and as a mild sedative and sleep-promoting agent.
- Hops has traditionally been used as a sedative, and to relieve tension.



## Passion Flower

**USE** — Passion flower is best known as a remedy for insomnia and disturbed sleep patterns, and is useful for short-term bouts of sleeplessness. Its gentle sedative properties produce a relaxing effect, reducing nervous activity and panic, thus making it a good non-addictive, herbal tranquilizing sedative.

### BENEFITS:

- Passion flower is a traditional herbal sedative that induces relaxation.
- Traditionally used in herbal medicine as a sleep aid (in cases of restlessness or insomnia due to mental stress).



## EIGHT

**USE** — Eight is designed to support the nervous and structural systems during times of discomfort and sleeplessness. This herbal combination includes white willow bark, hops, wood betony flowers, passion flower, ginger rhizome, chamomile flowers, cayenne fruit and schizandra fruit.

### BENEFITS:

- Herbal combination includes three sedative herbs to support restful sleep.
- Herbs in the combination such as white willow bark and ginger have traditionally been used for short-term relief of minor body and joint pain, fevers/nausea associated with the colds and headache.



## Magnesium Complex

**USE** — Magnesium is a natural muscle relaxant that can relieve built-up tension, cramps, ticks and even Restless Leg Syndrome that can rob many people of their sleep. Magnesium also enhances the effect of the amino acid tryptophan, which your body needs to make the neurotransmitter serotonin and sleep hormone melatonin.

### BENEFITS:

- Helps relax muscles and stop cramping.
- Involved in many physiological functions involved in relaxation and sleep.



## Lavender Essential Oil

**USE** — One British University study found that sleeping in a lavender-scented room could improve sleep quality by up to 20% by increasing Delta Sleep.

### BENEFITS:

- Aromatherapy as a nerve/calming.
- A few drops on the pillow is believed to bring quality deep sleep.