

Natural Help 4...

Insomnia



What is Insomnia?

Insomnia is characterized by too little or poor-quality sleep. This could include:

- Having trouble falling asleep
- Waking up during the night and struggling to fall back asleep
- Waking up too early in the morning
- Waking up feeling tired and not well-rested, despite a full night's sleep

Insomnia is something that troubles many people and has a number of different causes, the most common being stress, anxiety, or too much caffeine. What ever the cause, getting too **little sleep can have a serious affect on your daily life.**

It can lead to excessive sleepiness, fatigue, trouble concentrating or difficulty staying focused, feelings of depression, or irritability. It also increases the risks of having an accident or making a serious mistake. Because of this, it is important to ensure that you are **getting enough sleep each night.**

While most people need approximately 7-8 hours of sleep per night, this average differs between individuals. Some may only need 5 hours sleep, while others need at least 9 in order to feel **well-rested and rejuvenated** the following day.

Who Suffers From Insomnia?

Insomnia can affect anyone from children to the elderly, although prevalence tends to increase with age. People who are over 60 years old and women going through menopause are more prone to insomnia, probably due to **decreased levels of melatonin in the brain.**

What is Healthy Sleep?

In order to understand the causes of insomnia, we need to have a look at how the sleep cycle works.

The amino acid L-tryptophan (found naturally in certain foods) is converted into 5-HTP and is used in the manufacture of a neuro-transmitter called serotonin. Serotonin is transformed into a sleep hormone called melatonin by the pineal gland in the brain. The pineal gland only becomes active after dark. By regulating levels of melatonin, our bodies create the 'sleep-wake cycle' or circadian rhythm.

Of course, the process is more complex than this, and there are other things could

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contribute to [sleep problems](#). However, sufficient production of serotonin and melatonin is crucial in promoting and maintaining healthy sleep.

Diagnosing Insomnia

If you have had on-going difficulties sleeping, it is advisable to seek a professional evaluation. Keep a sleep diary for a week or two and record waking and sleeping hours, quality of sleep, as well as the **consequences of this lack of sleep** (such as fatigue during the day or difficulty concentrating). This will provide your doctor with a clearer picture of your symptoms and assist in an accurate diagnosis.

After discussing your sleep journal, your doctor will take your medical history, sleep history, and perform a physical exam. You will probably be asked questions regarding your **usual sleep habits**, any medications you may be taking, and your daily caffeine intake. Other questions may include whether or not you snore at night, if **you are in any physical pain**, or if there are problems that may be upsetting or concerning you.

Once your health care practitioner has made a thorough assessment, he or she will be able to decipher if the **insomnia has a particular physical** underlying cause that can be treated appropriately. Remember to ask your doctor about all treatment options so that you can make an informed decision. Many medical doctors are quick to prescribe sleeping tablets despite their known side effects and highly-addictive qualities. In some cases, you may be referred to a psychologist or sleep center for further evaluation.

What Causes Insomnia?

There are many **potential causes of insomnia**, although it is usually a sign that something in our life is not right or something is out of balance. It is thought that more than 50% of all cases of insomnia are linked to psychological causes, including [depression](#), [anxiety](#), and [stress](#).

Other Causes of Insomnia

Other causes include:

- [Sleep apnea](#)
- Disruptive [snoring](#)
- Bladder ailments or prostate problems
- Serotonin deficiency
- Decreased levels of melatonin in the brain (often affects the elderly)
- ['Restless legs' syndrome \(RLS\)](#) or [periodic limb movements \(PLM\)](#)
- Magnesium or iron deficiency
- [Hormonal imbalance](#)
- Shift work
- Jet lag
- Excessive consumption of caffeine or other stimulants
- A side effect of some prescription medication (especially anti-depressant medication)
- [Hypoglycemia](#)



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Michele Carelse, Clinical Psychologist



All of our natural remedies are formulated by our expert team of herbalists, naturopaths and homeopaths, and headed by Michele Carelse.

Michele has had years of experience in the manufacturing and use of natural remedies. In addition, she is a trained Clinical Psychologist and has been incorporating natural remedies into her treatment of patients with depression, anxiety, ADD, ADHD and stress for many years with spectacular results.

Help for Insomnia

In many cases **insomnia goes away by itself**, especially if it is related to jet lag or a stressful life event that is soon resolved. However, if **insomnia** is a consistent problem or begins to make you feel overly tired and unproductive during the day, it is advisable to seek some form of treatment.

Most treatment options aim at **addressing the underlying cause of the insomnia** or help by providing temporary symptom relief. Treatment options may include drug treatments, psychotherapy, visualization and relaxation techniques, as well as some herbal and homeopathic remedies.

Drug Treatments

Many doctors are realizing that prescribing **sleeping tablets should be a last resort** due to their highly-addictive qualities and negative side effects. What many people are not aware of is that while sleeping pills can help in some cases, they are not a cure for **insomnia**. **Sleeping tablets only offer temporary relief** and are should generally only be prescribed for a few days to allow the body to rest (e.g. after a very traumatic event).

Regular use often leads to rebound insomnia (where insomnia develops as a **withdrawal from the sleeping pills**) and addiction. Sleeping pills also come with other health and safety concerns, and may be unsafe to use if you have certain other medical problems. They may lead to drowsiness the following day and increase the chance of accidents and clumsiness after use. Be sure to explore all options and thoroughly research possible side-effects before agreeing to drug therapy.

Psychological

In many cases, **insomnia** is related to a psychological state such as excessive **stress**, **depression**, **anxiety**, or **burnout**.

Some form of psychotherapy is often recommended if a medical cause is not discovered, and is usually most beneficial. Therapy can also help you recondition your sleeping habits and **regain a healthy sleep-wake pattern** that best suits you.

Visualization and Relaxation Techniques

Visualization can be a particularly helpful technique when you are **struggling to fall asleep**. Picturing a tranquil place in your mind can help quiet the mind and body. Other relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, meditation, and muscle relaxation have also been used with great success.

Natural Remedies

Both herbal and homeopathic remedies are commonly used alternatives to sleeping tablets in **reducing insomnia**, and can be very effective in helping to assist an individual in the transition to **peaceful slumber without strong sedatives**

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or any concerning side effects.

Certain herbs such as *Hypericum perforatum*, *Scutellaria laterifolia*, *Passiflora incarnata* can be used to **maintain healthy sleep patterns** and promote optimal balance of sleep-related hormones involved in the sleep cycle.

Homeopathic remedies such as *Coffea C30* and *Nux Vom. C30* are also used to reduce insomnia and maintain restful, satisfying, and healthy sleep. Other natural supplements that are widely used to **address the underlying causes of chronic insomnia** are calcium lactate, magnesium lactate and vitamin B6.

What are the Different Types of Insomnia?

Insomnia or the inability to fall or remain asleep can take many different forms and has multiple causes.

We can identify **two main types of insomnia**:

- **Sleep-onset Insomnia** (problems falling asleep, also called Initial Insomnia)
- **Sleep-maintenance insomnia** (waking during the night and early in the morning)

Many people have a combination of these two types of insomnia.

Insomnia may also be chronic (nearly every night) or intermittent (occasional insomnia). Those people suffering from chronic insomnia either experience secondary insomnia (caused by another medical condition or a poor sleep environment) or they suffer from primary insomnia (not related to another medical or environmental condition).

Are There Other Disorders Related to Insomnia?

Insomnia is related to other sleep disorders such as:

- Hypersomnia
- [Narcolepsy](#)
- [Sleep apnea](#)
- [Nightmares](#) and [Night terrors](#)
- Sleep walking disorder

Tips for Coping with Insomnia

- **Try to stick to a sleep time routine.** Even adults need some form of sleep routine, and fluctuating sleep patterns can be detrimental to an insomnia sufferer. Try to get to bed at the same time each night and wake up at the same time each morning.
- **Reduce sleeping hours.** Too much sleep can also cause insomnia. Attempt cutting your time in bed by 1 hour for two weeks and see if this helps.
- **Get rid of the bedroom clock.** Set an alarm so you don't oversleep, but then hide it so that you are not constantly conscious of how much sleep you are missing. Ticking clocks are especially offensive to the insomniac!



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- **Keep active during the day.** Get regular exercise (at least 30 minutes daily), but avoid exercise close to bedtime.
- **Wind down each day and learn to relax.** Find ways to reduce your [stress](#) and set aside time each night to unwind and relax from the business of the day. Take a hot bath; drink some herbal tea; do a calming activity that you enjoy such as writing, reading, or working on a puzzle.
- **Stop trying so hard.** The worst possible thing to do when you cannot sleep is to try and force yourself to sleep. Rather, watch a TV program or read until you feel drowsy and then try again.
- **Stay clear of caffeine and other stimulants.** Stop drinking tea and coffee at least 6 hours before you go to sleep. Nicotine, chocolate, and sugar also act as stimulants and should be avoided. Alcohol, even though it does make you feel drowsy initially, prevents proper deep sleep and often results in frequent waking and restless sleep.
- **Good sleepy time snacks** include a glass of warm milk, banana, or a turkey sandwich – all contain L-tryptophan and can help to make you drowsy.
- **Curb the nap habit.** Try to avoid naps during the day. If you must nap, make it a power nap of no more than 20 minutes, and never nap after 3 PM.
- **Improve your sleeping environment.** Make your bedroom conducive to a good night's rest by investing in dark curtains to block out all light, earplugs if night noises disturb you, a comfortable mattress. Also ensure that you are neither too hot nor cold at night.

The Natural Approach

While Western medicine has become the norm in many cultures, it is not the only treatment option. Conventional western medicine, often called allopathic medicine, is the system of medicine taught at most medical schools and most pharmaceutical and synthetic medicines are manufactured and marketed according to the principles of allopathic medicine. Allopathic medicine is also sometimes called orthodox medicine.

Because most of us in the Western world have grown up in a society in which allopathic medicine is the prevailing norm, we forget that, only a few decades ago, homeopathic, herbal and other natural medicines were commonly available – and freely used even by conventional doctors. While there are often heated debates about which system of medicine is 'better' than the other, many responsible doctors (whether they are allopathic or not) recognize that both have a role to play in the treatment program.

Natural medicine has often been frowned on by conventional doctors, especially by those who did not have sufficient knowledge of these medicines. However, it is encouraging to note that some medical schools are now beginning to re-introduce it into their course work, thereby providing doctors with a wider range of treatment options from which to choose. In many countries, especially in Europe, India and China, natural and homeopathic medicines are commonly prescribed by conventional doctors and represent a significant part of the total annual drug sales.

Naturopathy is a branch of medicine (just as allopathy is a branch of medicine) which operates according to the underlying philosophy that the body has an innate capacity to heal itself. While natural medicines are often called 'alternative' or 'complimentary' medicines, they are, in fact, a unique and independent form of medicine in their own right, well able to treat a variety of conditions. Perhaps the

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term 'holistic' medicine is more apt, given the broad range of treatment options and approaches which are to be found within the practice of natural medicine, which encompasses many different disciplines, including herbalism, homeopathy, iridology, osteopathy, chiropractic, therapeutic massage techniques, aromatherapy, acupuncture and many, many more.

Most naturopaths will use a variety of treatment modalities in order to treat their patients in a holistic way to support health, relieve symptoms and prevent future disease. In fact, even the World Health Organization defines health as being "... more than simply the absence of illness. It is the active state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being." This is a wonderfully clear description of holistic or natural medicine, which strives to support health (thereby relieving or preventing symptoms), rather than simply eliminating disease.

Although allopathic medicine certainly has a role to play and has made a tremendous contribution to medical science during the past century, there is a growing perception that it is not the only answer and that, in many cases, holistic medicine can accomplish just as much, if not more – without the risk of side effects, addiction and sacrifice to health so commonly associated with pharmaceutical drugs. Contrary to common perception, and provided that they are manufactured in the correct way, natural medicines can work quickly and safely to promote healing.

In many cases, they can succeed where pharmaceutical drugs have failed. Despite frequent reports that they are 'unproven' and 'untested', the opposite is true. Natural medicines have a long history of usage and there is a wealth of empirical evidence to support their effectiveness and safety. In addition, active clinical research is carried out by many academic hospitals and universities to support the extensive traditional and empirical evidence behind natural medicines.

It is also important to know that, like any medicine, herbal and homeopathic medicines must be manufactured in the correct way, following acceptable procedures and manufacturing methods to ensure maximum effectiveness and safety. Due to the recent rise in popularity of natural remedies, many companies have sprung up to take advantage of the market. Unfortunately not all of them are equipped to manufacture to the correct standards, often resulting in a flood of inferior (and sometimes even unsafe) remedies onto the market – and giving natural remedies a bad name.

Even some pharmaceutical companies have rushed to claim their market share by producing so-called 'standardized' extracts of herbs and offering these as superior to the tried and tested methods of naturopathic manufacturing. Nothing could be further from the truth. While 'standardized' extracts may offer benefit of easy consistency of dosage (and cheaper more efficient production lines), they have grave disadvantages. These include an increase in side effects as the medicines produced in this manner lose the natural protective properties of the herbs. In some cases, these side effects have proved fatal – as was seen in the liver toxicity associated with standardized extracts of kava kava, a herb previously safely used for generations without any known side effects.

Most naturopaths recommend what is called the Full Spectrum Method of extraction – which retains the benefits of ALL the active ingredients within the herb as opposed to isolating only one – thereby providing a more complete treatment as well as superior protection against side effects.



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Whatever your choice, always choose wisely. Research what is best for you. If you have a chronic or life threatening condition, don't make changes without first discussing them with your doctor in order that your condition may be monitored. Well informed and supportive practitioners will support patients who want to take responsibility for their own health.

Related Natural Remedies:

Serenite Plus: Natural sleep tonic for a restful night

SerenitePlus is an herbal formula specially formulated by a Clinical Psychologist for teenagers and adults. The natural ingredients are chosen for their soothing properties to **assist with occasional routine restlessness at night and to wind down naturally** after a busy day. Being in tincture form, Serenite Plus is quickly absorbed and gets to work almost immediately as a **natural sleep tonic to support the maintenance of night time harmony and rest.**

SerenitePlus has been used safely and effectively for many years. Using up-to-date scientific knowledge of natural sleep patterns, SerenitePlus is a new and improved herbal formula.

SerenitePlus may also be combined with [Serenite-LT](#) for added benefits.

[Learn more about Serenite Plus](#)

Serenite-LT: Natural remedy supports healthy sleep patterns and sustained peaceful, restful nights

Many of our customers are already familiar with Native Remedies' SerenitePlus, which has been used safely for **evening support of healthy sleep.**

Due to ongoing product research and customer demand, it became obvious that there was a definite need for a remedy which could provide **ongoing, long-term support** of the sleep cycle. This led to the development of Serenite-LT - a unique herbal remedy with added nutrients, specially formulated to naturally support the sleep cycle and maintain healthy sleep patterns.

Using up-to-date scientific knowledge of **natural sleep patterns**, Serenite-LT combines selected herbs and sleep-supporting nutrients in an effective formula, which will help provide support for a good night's rest on a regular basis.

[Learn more about Serenite-LT](#)

Sleep Tonic: To promote healthy sleep patterns

Sleep Tonic is a remedy containing a combination of three, **cellular-supporting tissue salts** especially selected for their effect on brain and nervous system health. This combination of tissue salts can be used regularly in a general capacity to **promote systemic balance in the brain and nervous system**, as well as in conjunction with other remedies to maintain therapeutic effectiveness.

Tissue salts, also called **cell salts** or **biochemic salts**, are **composed of minerals which occur naturally at a cellular level** in our bodies and all

organic matter on earth, such as plants, rocks and soil. Just like the bricks and mortar of a wall, tissue salts are the building blocks for cells. All in all, **twelve tissue salts have been identified as being essential components of all body cells** and without which, true health is not possible. Each tissue salt plays a different, yet vital role in maintaining cellular health in all the organs and systems of the body.

Sustaining the correct balance of tissue salts in the body is similar to the structural engineer laying good foundations when building a house. This process of tissue salt balance, called Biochemistry, was first explored by Dr. Scheussler, a prominent 19th Century German physician. Dr. Scheussler discovered that, when reduced to ashes, each human cell contained 12 minerals or biochemic tissue salts. He believed that these minerals should be present in all living cells (and in perfect balance) to support good health and well-being. This knowledge is still highly respected today and practiced by Homeopaths and Naturopaths all over the world.

Making sure that all the cells of your brain and nervous system are functioning effectively will also mean that you will enhance the bio-availability of all supplements, remedies and even nutrients in your diet – thereby maximizing all your brain health efforts! And because our tissue salts are naturally occurring in the body and manufactured to ensure safe, yet optimum potency, they are safe to use for all ages (from infancy to old age) – as well as during pregnancy!

[Learn more about Sleep Tonic](#)

[Calm Within CD](#): Improve relaxation, support balanced emotions and stress levels.

The Calm Within CD is composed by our Clinical Psychologist to promote good physical and emotional health using a specially developed therapeutic sound techniques and [soothing music](#).

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[Learn more about the Calm Within CD](#)

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