

98. INSOMNIA AND SLEEP DISTURBANCES

Sleep has been called "nature's perfect healer." Sleep allows our immune system to rebalance itself; sleep-deprived people tend to be more vulnerable to immune-related disorders.

Yet estimates are that more than 15% of America's population regularly suffers from insomnia and other sleep disturbances, while at least 50% of Americans suffer periods of sleep deprivation or disturbance serious enough to cause at least temporary functional impairment. In fact, more than one billion sleeping pills are prescribed each year (and this doesn't include any OTC remedies).

Insomnia is usually defined as: *"Sleep disturbance or frequent night-time waking resulting in less than six hours sleep and resulting in daytime problems, such as drowsiness, work impairment, etc."*

How much sleep is actually necessary. Throughout the East, it is taught that a healthy male should sleep no more than six hours in 24, while a healthy female should sleep no more than seven. However, recent studies have shown that a person can survive for quite a while by having only 20 minutes sleep every four hours!

This is most often seen in soldiers during combat conditions. But no serious damage occurs even during "peacetime" conditions following days of such a sleeping routine.

insomnia plagues women more than men, with about 85% of insomnia being psychiatric in origin, and clinical or sub-clinical depression being the leading cause, by far. Other common causes include: Lunar ("full moon") insomnia; abuse of alcohol, coffee, tea, colas, etc.; and even sleeping pills can cause insomnia, especially when one abuses them, then tries to withdraw from their usage.

Virtually every health problem has food in some way connected to it. This is especially true of insomnia and its close companion, depression. And generally, this "food connection" is an abusive diet, rather than a deficient one. In other words, the "food cure" for insomnia and depression (as well as most other ailments that plague Westerners) is one of avoidance of abuses, and NOT addition of supplements.

When we talk of depression-linked insomnia, doctors of energy medicine (which includes modalities such as acupuncture, acupressure and homeopathy, etc.) immediately think of "imbalance" within the liver and gall bladder. In other words, to cure both insomnia and depression, such doctors actually seek to restore bioenergetic balance in at least these two, key organs; then symptoms fade, replaced by blossoming health.

Two important "food culprits" must be eliminated from such a sufferer's diet before any meaningful, long-term cure can be effected: Sugar and alcohol. And as a general, overall improvement to diet, avoiding slaughtered products, excessive salt, all dairy items and tobacco is also vital.

In their place, choosing fresh, local fruits and vegetables, whenever possible; and making grains and grain products the staple of your diet, is a kind of "no-brainer" for restoring and maintaining health.

In other words, following just this dietary program, you, too, will discover that most

health problems -- not just depression-linked insomnia -- will reverse (heal) themselves on their own, even without using other "self-health" techniques, such as those described below. Those methods and techniques should be considered primarily as first-aid for occasional insomnia; or "bridges" between your present "healthstyle" and a new, improved one, assuming you suffer from chronic insomnia.

Several of these methods rely upon the power of touch -- massage, mostly; but not just light rubbing. These are G-Jo Acupressure methods which call for rather deep (and perhaps even momentarily painful) stimulation.

Deep, brief "triggering" of G-Jo Acupressure points causes a change in internal energy and has a balancing effect on the organs involved. These methods are used symptomatically -- that is, when you are actually lying in bed, trying to get to sleep.

The first technique is to **pinch and massage the fleshy areas of eyebrows, directly above pupils**. As with all these other touch methods, here you are contacting several important G-Jo Acupressure points at the same time.

The second technique (which is my, personal favorite) is to **massage the crease of either, inner wrist**. Here, you are actually contacting three important acupressure points on either wrist. In my experience, sleep usually follows within five minutes of doing this simple, rubbing massage.

Massage either big toe -- especially behind the nail, on the side furthest from the other nails; that is the third possibility. In this case, you are working directly upon a point connected to the liver "meridian" (or energy channel) ... the pathway which connects the "aura" of energy (which surrounds every living being like an envelope) with the distressed liver of the would-be sleeper.

A somewhat different fourth means of promoting sleep is to do "alternate nostril breathing." Here, you close one nostril by pressing it with your fingertip on the inhalation; then release, and close the other nostril in the same manner on the exhalation. Repeat this process ten times. And if you want, you can count sheep at the same time.

A non-touch method which can also be helpful is **homeopathy**. If you're a regular reader of this magazine, you need no introduction to the healing benefits of this age-old medical technique of "like cures like." While there are numerous homeopathic remedies for the self-treatment of insomnia, the following are some of the most widely prescribed. For self-treatment, however, I suggest you use only "low-potency" remedies -- those which are "6 X" or "12 X," and which can be found at nearly any health food store, today.

These homeopathic remedies include: **Aconite**; **Arnica montana**; **Belladonna**; **Chamomilla**; **China**; **Coffea cruda**; **Gelsemium**; **Ignatia**; **Mag phos.**; **NUX VOMICA**; **Pulsatilla**; **Sulphur**. One or several of these remedies may be taken symptomatically -- several pellets at a time -- and if you're in confusion about which one to try, my suggestion would be to start with Nux Vomica. It's the most widely recommended remedy for such treatment, of the more than 20 which are commonly used.

In conclusion, when suffering from insomnia, there are several things you should avoid - - coldness, dampness, alcoholic beverages and an uncomfortable mattress rank high on the list. And, of course, keep away from caffeine.

The worst offender, however, is commercial sleeping tablets. These, you should avoid like a plague, since the risk of addiction is high. Instead, try some of the natural methods I've described in this column. I think you'll find them very helpful. A complete Self-Health Report on the subject of *Better Sleep with Acugenics* is available from The G-Jo Institute (see www.g-jo.com for details).