

Set Your Snooze Control With Herbal Supplements

Over one-third of adults say that they have symptoms of insomnia over the course of any one year. Unfortunately, about 10-15 percent of adults struggle with chronic insomnia. Lack of sleep can be traced back to too much stress, anxiety, caffeine, and discomfort from a medical problem, depression, work shift issues, or travel. For some people, insomnia presents itself as trouble falling asleep, while others have trouble staying asleep, and still others wake up too early. It all comes down to the same thing, people aren't getting enough restorative sleep, which leaves insomniacs feeling tired, irritable, and unfocused all day.

Before pharmaceutical sleeping pills were on the market, herbs were the treatment of choice to cure a restless night. As the list of adverse effects to sleeping pills grows longer and longer, herbal sleep aids are again becoming the option of choice. Valerian has been known to give insomniacs better sleep for more than 1,000 years as it eases stress and has been scientifically documented for its sedative effect. Even better, valerian is non-addictive and includes no morning hangover from using it. A study on valerian extract found that the time to fall asleep can be reduced to that of what prescription sedatives promise. Earlier in the year, a similar study found that the combination of valerian and hops shortened the time it takes to fall asleep in a group of twenty-seven insomniacs from what was almost an hour to just about twelve minutes. Chamomile tea has a soothing, sedative effect and is still a pleasant drink. Additionally, chamomile can be used for anxiety and to soothe intestinal upset such as indigestion and heartburn. Other mildly sedating herbs include lemon balm, catnip, passion flower, and skullcap. Still other herbs to consider include corydalis, which encourages feelings of relaxation, in turn helping people to fall asleep, and lavender oil, which acts as a great calming agent.

Green tea, which contains L-theanine, has a calming effect in the body and also strengthens immunity. When feelings of anxiety interfere with sleep, help can be found by taking L-theanine about an hour before one's desired bedtime, as L-theanine interacts with the brain receptors that are associated with relaxation, therefore inducing a relaxed state of mind.

Serotonin also plays a huge role in sleep, while 5-HTP helps to make this chemical. Studies have proven that by taking 5-HTP, insomnia can be helped a great deal in terms of sleep quality and longer REM sleep periods. About 100-300 mg of 5-HTP should be taken before bedtime for most people. Since some people can feel a little nauseous when first taking 5-HTP, starting with 50 mg for the first few nights and building up to higher doses is advised. Some reports of vivid dreams and even nightmares have been reported from taking large amounts of 5-HTP and those people who are taking anti-depressants should not take 5-HTP. L-Tryptophan is an amino acid that is converted into serotonin and has been proven to be a successful remedy for insomnia. Although this supplement was unavailable for several years, it is now back on the market.

Melatonin also plays an important role in regulating the body's clock as it is secreted for several hours each night. People with insomnia tend to have lower levels. Therefore, taking supplemental melatonin, especially in a time-release form, an hour or so before one's desired bedtime can help to get back into a better sleep schedule. Lastly, magnesium can help resolve sleep issues, especially in those people who have sleep problems because of restless leg syndrome (RLS).

No matter what herbal supplement or mineral you decide to use, always consult your health care practitioner before adding vitamin supplements and herbs to one's diet while taking prescription medication. The above mentioned herbal supplements can be found at your local or internet health food store.

About the Author

More information on [herbs and herbal supplements](#) can be found at VitaNet, LLC Health Food Store. <http://vitanetonline.com/>

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