

# INSOMNIA

You can divide insomnia into two categories, those who cannot get to sleep and those that wake in the early hours.

For those in the latter group low blood sugar in the night is often the cause of waking too early.

Cut out all tea, coffee and cola (which all contain caffeine) after 2pm. If you wish to eat sugar do not eat sugar after 7pm. Try eating supper, a banana or oatcakes. This will help keep your blood sugar levels up in the night. Eating sugar gives you a roller coaster blood sugar level and eating sugar in the evening may well be the cause of very low blood sugar levels at night. Replace them with slow acting carbohydrates.

For those who cannot get to sleep take some form of exercise each evening.

Try to practise relaxation techniques as part of your bed-time routine. Adopt the same routine each bedtime

The two top supplements for insomnia are 5-HTP and magnesium.

Five hydroxy – tryptophan (a natural amino acid), (5-HTP) converts to serotonin the neurotransmitter associated in the brain with relaxation.

Magnesium is a natural muscle relaxant that helps 5-HTP convert into serotonin. Take 100mgs of 5-HTP and 100 to 200mgs of magnesium 45 minutes before bedtime. Tart, sour or Montmorency Cherries contain melatonin. Melatonin levels rise towards bedtime. Serotonin levels rise as we awake. Eating Montmorency (tart, sour) Cherries one hour before bedtime may help you sleep. Available bottled and frozen. Ask **Belper Natural Health Centre** for details.

For children try and adopt the same nightly routine that doesn't vary and, if possible, make sure your curtains cut out all light. Everyone should try to sleep in complete darkness and dim lighting as the evening progresses. Avoid laptops, computers etc late at night.

This advice is not meant to replace specific medical advice. It is intended to provide general information only.

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