

Hot Topics in Health & Wellness



Sleep Aids, Tips and Training

About 30% of Americans have reported having insomnia at some point last year, with women reporting higher cases than men. The issue of sleep continues to be a serious one and we need to retrain ourselves to want to go to bed again! For some people poor sleep is a learned behavior that can be unlearned and training your brain is far more effective than prescription pills.

First, as we age, we believe our sleep becomes less important. This is wrong! We need the same amount of sleep, but we do have some age-related things that affect sleep, specifically staying asleep in the last third of the sleep period. They are -

- ◆ Noncancerous prostate growth leads to more frequent nighttime bathroom trips.
- ◆ Impaired breathing and sleep apnea are more commonly found in men,

smoking and obesity can start airway complications.

- ◆ Aches, pains, stress and anxiety can lead to more broken sleep causing more daytime drowsiness.

Initial step to fixing sleep is talking with a trusted medical professional. A PCP can help track down treatable causes of sleep insomnia or deficiency. Doctors can also point out potential issues in our diet and lifestyle which may lead to sleep loss, like caffeine or alcohol.

Next, would be **medication**. Sleep pills are a **BIG MONEY** business. Surveys suggest



more than half of people over 60 have used a nonprescription sleep aid and 1 in 10 use one every night. Sleep aids can help put you to sleep but struggle to keep someone asleep. Sleep aids can be effective but often miss the mark on most serious sleep issues. If you must take a sleep aid take the lowest dose possible and take them as directed to avoid daytime drowsiness, which like a hangover can lead to accidents!

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) has been shown to be more effective than sleeping pills. A perfect candidate for CBT is someone who has a consistent negative thought or feeling towards their sleep pattern. These feelings lead to a

cycle of anxiety and stress which worsens sleeplessness and increases hopelessness about sleep. Insomniaphobes dread the bed and feel they will never sleep normally again. This hopelessness leads the sleep challenged to blame negative emotions during the day on lack of sleep. To begin CBT the first step is -

- ◆ Sleep restriction is needed to establish or reestablish good sleep patterns. It will require creating a sleep pattern of when to go to bed and when to wake up. The initial restriction will create more fatigue at night strengthening the internal sleep drive. Training your body when to sleep and when to wake up.
- ◆ Gradually increase sleep sessions to restore a normal 7 - 9-hour sleep schedule. Scheduling sessions with a CBT therapist will instill positive thoughts and reinforce good sleep habits.
- ◆ Even if you are not an insomniaphobe CBT teaches that sleep is a mind-body issue. Recognizing and resolving the physical ailments, problem behaviors and negative attitudes are keys to better sleep.

Bedtime Snack Lettuce Wrap



Because I know all of you have started food prepping, we already have pre-cooked chicken breasts in the refrigerator. Chicken is high in Tryptophan, commonly associated with Thanksgiving dinner, and helps the body fall asleep. Lightly season the chicken breasts with salt and pepper, maybe cayenne pepper and grill to rest in the fridge till we need it. Now is the time to use it!

- Depending on the size of the chicken breast we will need a 1/4 to 1/2 of a chicken breast. Slice it as thinly as possible.
- One thinly sliced piece of REAL cheese (no Kraft slices)
- When at the store, grab one head of Bibb lettuce. For our wrap, 1 or 2 pieces of Bibb lettuce will act as our bread. It will give our snack a little crunch.
- Lightly dress the chicken, cheese and lettuce with a small amount of mustard or honey mustard.
- Enjoy! We want to avoid late night snacking if possible. If we need some slumber food, keep it under 100 calories.

MERCY HEALTH CARE NAVIGATOR

What is a Care Navigator? Good question! Health Care Navigators are advisors who will advocate for you (and your family) and ensure your health care needs are met. They can assist with finding providers, specialists, education, or any issues related to services provided by Mercy Health. In order to use the Care Navigator you need to be enrolled under the Atonne Group Health Plan for 2021. You can contact the Mercy Health Care Navigator at 616-685-1477 or visit HR for more information



CONTACT INFORMATION:

Drew Ames

e-mail drew@wellsafecoaches.com