

Sleep Herbs and Supplements

	How it works	Dose	Side effects- interactions	Other info
Herbs				
Chamomile	Binds to receptors in the brain that promote calming.	Brew and drink strong cup of chamomile tea – 2 teabags per cup.	No known adverse side effects. Is member of daisy flower family – avoid if allergies to daisies.	GRAS. Used traditionally for centuries for all people – including children and pregnant women
Kava	Used for mild anxiety, insomnia.	100 – 300 mg kava extract daily. Standardized to 33- 55% kavalactones. Take as liquid, or capsules.	Do NOT use if taking other sedative drugs, and especially alcohol. Side effects will add up.	Some improperly prepared batches of kava caused liver damage. Be sure to use reputable brand. Should be <i>water-extracted</i> .
Rhodiola	Russian herb, used to feel calm, increase stamina and promote sleep. Considered an adaptogen.	Usual recc dose: 100 – 200 mg daily	Can cause stomach upset	Study done in 2008 showed improvement in treating anxiety.
Valerian	Enhances activity of GABA (a neurotransmitter) –similar to benzodiazepines	400 – 900 mg valerian extract 2 hours before bed, for up to 1 month.	Do NOT use if taking other sedative drugs, side effects will add up.	Very stinky, but then you know it's the real valerian!
Melatonin	Is a natural hormone produced in the pineal gland, deep inside the brain. Made from tryptophan.	Helpful for *jet lag. Sustained release better for people with trouble <u>staying</u> asleep. Immediate-release better for people with trouble <u>falling</u> asleep. 0.3 – 5 mg dose taken 30	Aspirin, ibuprofen and beta-blockers can interfere with melatonin secretion.	Melatonin maintains our biologic clock, usually 10 times higher in the evening/ dark.

		- 60 minutes before bedtime.		
Magnesium	Relaxes smooth muscles and nerves. Is essential co-factor in over 200 body functions, including healthy brain chemistry	Women: 320 mg per day. Men 420 mg magnesium per day. Majority of Americans do not get adequate magnesium in their diets.	Excess magnesium can cause diarrhea.	Is mineral found in dark leafy greens, legumes, nuts, and whole grains.
L tryptophan & 5-HTP (hydroxy tryptophan)	L-tryptophan is converted to 5-HTP, then to serotonin, and melatonin. Found in protein-rich foods (milk, pumpkin seeds, turkey)	Start 50 mg of 5-HTP per day. Can increase to 200 mg 5-HTP per day.	Avoid if taking antidepressants (SSRIs or MAOIs)	5-HTP is more easily absorbed than tryptophan.
Theanine	Amino acid found in green tea. Its calming effects balance some of the stimulation effects of tea.	Cup of green tea has about 25 mg. <u>Supplement:</u> 200 mg L-theanine daily	Avoid drinking excessive amounts of green tea (greater than 5 cups/day)	

Reference sources:

Mental Health, Naturally. Kathi Kemper, MD. Amer Acad Pediatrics, 2010
Complementary and Alternative Medicine Secrets, W. Kohatsu, MD Editor, 2002.

Benefits of Exercise

- Increases blood flow
- Moves tryptophan into the brain.
- Boosts mood via endorphins -- body's natural 'runners' high' phenomenon
- Makes body physically tired and more ready for rest/sleep

Sleep Medicines

	Brand Names	How they work	Other info
Medicine			
Antihistamines: diphenhydramine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Diphenhydramine</u> (found in brand names like Nytol, Sominex, Sleepinal, Compoz) • <u>Doxylamine</u> (found in brand names like Unisom, Nighttime Sleep Aid) 	<p>OTC sleep aids are meant to be used for short term insomnia. Tolerance to the medication, meaning that you need a higher dosage of the medication for it to work, can develop in only a few days.</p> <p>Side Effects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • drowsiness the next day • dizziness and forgetfulness • clumsiness, feeling off balance • constipation and urinary retention • blurred vision • dry mouth and throat 	<p>Patients do say that antihistamines help them sleep better, but this effect has not been substantiated through research studies. Antihistamines may have a mild, positive effect on modest short term insomnia, but side effects, such as drowsiness during the next day, can be common and severe. There is not enough evidence to support OTC sleep aids as an effective insomnia treatment.</p>
Tricyclics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Aventyl, Pamelor (nortriptyline)</u> • <u>Desyrel (trazodone)</u> • <u>Elavil (amitriptyline)</u> • <u>Serzone (nefazodone)</u> 	<p>Reduces pain, particularly for <u>headache</u>, nerve pain, and <u>fibromyalgia</u>; some can aid sleep.</p>	
Benzodiazepines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Ativan (lorazepam)</u> • <u>Dalmane (flurazepam)</u> • <u>Halcion (triazolom)</u> • <u>Klonopin (clonazepam)</u> • <u>Restoril (temazepam)</u> • <u>Valium (diazepam)</u> 	<p>Used to reduce <u>anxiety</u>, benzodiazepines can also aid with sleep. These drugs are not for long-term use. Side effects can include daytime sleepiness, cognitive impairment, and dependence. They can also reduce the amount of <u>REM sleep</u>.</p>	
Non-benzo's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Ambien (zolpidem)</u> • <u>Lunesta (eszopiclone)</u> • <u>Sonata (zaleplon)</u> 	<p>Aids with sleep, while not causing the same disruptions to the sleep cycle that benzodiazepines do. They are generally considered to be safer for longer use. Side effects can be similar to those of benzodiazepines, although generally less severe.</p>	
Melatonin analogues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Ramelteon (Rozerem)</u> 	<p>This medication mimics the sleep regulation hormone melatonin. It has little risk of physical dependency but does have side effects. It is used for sleep onset problems and is not effective for problems in staying asleep.</p>	