



# OPTIONS CENTER HEALTH TOPIC



## To Sleep or Not to Sleep...

Reproduced from *Physician's Toolbox*  
Cornerstone Health Services

**Insomnia** - The inability to fall asleep and stay asleep throughout the night is known as insomnia. Sleep difficulties like this affect nearly 70 million Americans each year. That's roughly 33% of the population. **If the condition persists for more than a month it is considered chronic.** This is the case for 1 in 20 people in America today.

Many people regard **sleep deprivation** as only a minor nuisance and not a genuine health concern. This thinking is very wrong. Going without sleep severely reduces the effectiveness of the body's immune system. Lack of sleep will inhibit tissue repair and healing, especially muscle and tendonous tissues. Also, getting too little sleep can spike morning blood pressure and lead to transient ischemic attacks (TIA) or stroke. Sleep deprivation also leads to **adrenal exhaustion** and chronic health problems such as **Chronic Fatigue**.

**Sleep Apnea** is another disorder that can disrupt sleep patterns and contribute to fatigue, personality changes and serious health problems. There are two types, obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) and the less common central sleep apnea. The former is caused by an obstruction of the airways during sleeping and is more common in men, especially those who are between the ages of 40 and 70, are overweight, and snore.



## Additional Considerations

- ✓ Hypoglycemia (adrenal exhaustion) is a common reason for difficulty staying asleep. This is seen in people who awaken between 2-3:00 a.m. People in this state must (and all of should) eat a small snack, before bed, that is balanced 2 grams of carbohydrate for each gram of protein. This will prevent a drop in blood sugar around 2-3:00 a.m. that wakes a person. Eating this 2:1 snack may also reduce sleep latency.
- ✓ Mental and emotional stress will drive the sympathetic nervous system and prevent the GABA/Chloride channel from opening, which is necessary for the brain to shut down. Relaxation such as deep breathing, prayer, meditation, etc. can help dramatically.
- ✓ The amino acid tryptophan can become 5-HTP, then serotonin, and finally melatonin. B-Complex vitamins are required for this to occur. Stress and poor diet can lead to deficiencies of any of these and result in depression and insomnia.
- ✓ Too much or too little exercise can cause insomnia. Activities (in the evening) that raise the heart rate above 65-70% of maximum will stimulate cortisol release and can make getting to sleep difficult. Lack of exercise prevents the natural degradation of excess stress hormone (cortisol) and prevents the "shut down" needed to get to sleep.
- ✓ Restless leg syndrome can cause insomnia.

## OPTIONS ALSO OFFERS YOU

- ✓ A saliva test called "Adrenal Stress Index" which determines sleep quality by testing the cortisol levels throughout the day. This monitors the circadian rhythm of the body.

