



Do you suffer from Insomnia? - October 2011

Inside this month's issue

How is your sleep?

So what is Insomnia?

What causes Insomnia?

Why do we need sleep?

How is your sleep pattern?

Do you go to bed each night and have a peaceful nights uninterrupted sleep or do you struggle for hours to get to sleep?

It doesn't matter how tired you are? You still find it hard to get to sleep and it can be so frustrating to lie awake for hours, anxiously watching the clock? Or maybe you drop off to sleep and then wake in the night and find that you have difficulty going back to sleep - this is called Insomnia and is a very common sleep problem.

Insomnia will eventually take its toll on the body, affecting your energy, mood, and ability to function during the day. Chronic insomnia can even contribute to health problems.

So what is Insomnia?

Insomnia is relatively common; affecting more woman than men except when we age then it is generally equal between the sexes. Insomnia is the inability to get the amount of sleep you need to wake up feeling rested and refreshed. Different people need different amounts of sleep, insomnia is defined by the quality of your sleep and how you feel after sleeping, not the number of hours you sleep; also the problem which creates the insomnia differs from person to person.

Signs of insomnia

- Difficulty falling a sleep despite being tired
- Waking up frequently during the night
- Trouble getting back to sleep when awakened during the night
- Relying on sleeping pills or alcohol to fall asleep
- Constantly waking very early in the morning
- Drowsiness, irritability, lack of concentration or fatigue during the day

What causes Insomnia?

There are many factors, which can cause Insomnia; it could be something as simple as drinking too much caffeine during the day or a more complex issue like an underlying medical condition or feeling overloaded with responsibilities causing anxiety and depression. The phase could be acute (just a few days) or chronic (failure to get an entire nights sleep over a one-month period).

Below is a list of possible causes:

- An acute bout of stress (worrying about day to day problems), jetlag, bereavement, relationship problems
- Chronic stress - anxiety/worry - underlying mental or physical issue - Depression
- unresolved emotional issues
- Medication (drugs) - side effects
- Environmental noises - neighbours, traffic
- Hormones - menopause
- Chronic pain
- Erratic sleep patterns - late nights, too much caffeine or alcohol
- Health problems
- Sleep apnoea
- Worn-out mattress/bed or too soft/too firm mattress. Uncomfortable pillow
- Poor nutritional habits -eating too close to bedtime
- Lack of magnesium & calcium can cause you to wake in the night and find yourself unable to get back to sleep.

Why do we need sleep?

Sleep is the time the body can undergo repair and detoxification. We know that we need sleep. We know that during sleep our body's cells repair themselves, growth hormones are released, our minds process information, and we re-energize. We have to sleep because it is essential to maintaining normal levels of cognitive skills such as speech, memory, innovative and flexible thinking. In other words, sleep plays a significant role in brain development.

Sleep deprivation not only has a major impact on cognitive functioning but also on emotional and physical health such as high blood pressure and an increase risk of obesity. Research suggests that appetite-regulating hormones are affected by sleep and that sleep deprivation could lead to weight gain. In two studies, people who slept five hours or less per night had higher levels of ghrelin - a hormone that stimulates hunger - and lower levels of the appetite-suppressing hormone leptin than those who slept eight hours per night. So make sure getting adequate sleep is your number one priority if you are gaining weight!

Tips to improve your Sleep pattern

Once you find the cause of your insomnia then you can make changes to improve the quality of your sleep.

- Keep a diary of what you have been doing during the day - daytime habits, sleep routines, exercise, eating habits, alcohol intake, caffeine intake.
- Check the condition of your mattress, pillows - are they comfortable or worn out.
- Remove stimulating habits such as late-night TV, Internet surfing, video games, etc.
- Try and keep a regular sleep schedule as far as possible - going to bed and getting up at the same times each day - this will help your body get back into a regular sleep rhythm.
- Keep your bedroom quiet - free from noise, dark and well ventilated.
- Prepare your brain for sleep (melatonin helps regulate sleep), increase light exposure during the day and increase soft lighting at night. Avoiding any bright light before bedtime.
- If you have trouble sleeping get out of bed and do something relaxing - reading, taking a warm bath, listening to relaxing and soothing music. When you feel sleepy go back to bed.
- Use relaxation techniques - deep breathing, visualization and meditation. Focus on relaxing every muscle in your body starting from your feet and working up to your head, be aware of your breathing.
- Deal with your stress, anxiety, worries or depression by seeing a specialist or therapist that can help you to work through and let go of any emotional issues.

Visit my website www.mindserenity.co.uk and find out how NLP, TLT and Hypnosis may help you to address your emotional issues.

- Allow 3 hours between eating and going to bed. Improve your nutrition by avoiding processed and convenience foods - eat natural. Increase daily exercise.
- Try herbal teas - Valarian (sedative herb), Chamomile
- Supplements - Melatonin, 5 HTP - regulates the wake/sleep cycle
- Magnesium & calcium
- Visit a sleep disorder specialist for Apnoea

Start getting a good night's sleep now and improve your quality of life.