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Resolve to Put Insomnia to Rest!

In our society we put a premium on our waking hours and have the tendency to underestimate the importance of a full-night's sleep. Millions of people who suffer from insomnia look for quick fixes instead of exploring the root causes of the problem. Sleep hygiene is an afterthought for many people. Evening is a time to allow our minds and bodies to turn inward to our subconscious. Sleep deprivation is the root of many health issues like memory impairment, a weakened immune system and stress that can lead to cardiac disease, heart disease and digestive disorders.

Exposure to the diminishing light at dusk helps regulate sleep hormones in the body. Excessive lighting at night, evening shift work, evening computing, video games, television and late-night eating all serve to counteract the body's natural rhythms. It's no wonder people have trouble sleeping. Rather than embrace nighttime as rest time, we tend to let our minds wander from one element of stress to another keeping us up for hours or perhaps an entire evening. We are then forced to approach the new day without having benefited from the regenerative powers that night time brings.

In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) sleep occurs when the yang energy of the day folds into the yin energy of nighttime. Yin energy of the body is cooling and restorative. It is the time of day when our bodies turn inward and regenerate. This is the time we dream and explore the caverns of our unconscious mind. Conversely, daytime is yang, which is expansive. We expend the energy we have built up from the process of sleeping. Together, this is the cycle of yin and yang.

To apply this yin-yang concept to your everyday life try eating your last meal at least three hours before going to bed. For example, you can "cool" your yang energy down by avoiding hot and spicy food and drink. Avoid alcohol, coffee, chocolate and any other stimulants, especially late in the day.

To improve your sleep cycles, help circulate your body's energy by working out or by gentle exercising. Build your body's nutritive aspect by eating marrow-based soups and stews, dark pigmented vegetables and fruits. Avoid overworking or over rumination as well.

An invaluable tool to help your brain unwind is meditation. It helps the body create a sense of calm. Meditation can reduce stress, increase feelings of well-being, and improve overall health. It can help one increase alertness, relaxation and reflection even in "waking" states. Meditation is best practiced during the day to help improve your sleep patterns at night.

If you or someone you know suffers from insomnia call today to see what acupuncture and Oriental medicine can do for you!

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Tips for a Restful Night

Sound sleep is the foundation of good health. We need 6-8 hours of sleep every night to recharge our batteries.

Practicing good sleep hygiene and keeping your body in sync with the rhythm of day and night can help your body cope with sleep deprivation and give it an opportunity to get stronger and heal.

By implementing just a few of these suggestions, you should notice a great improvement in your sleep and how you function during daylight hours.

Sufferers of Chronic Fatigue Find Relief With Oriental Medicine

Chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS) is far more than just being tired. It is a frustrating, complicated disorder characterized by extreme fatigue that may worsen with physical or mental activity and does not improve with rest. Those affected with CFS can get so run down that it interferes with the ability to function in day to day activities with some becoming severely disabled and even bedridden. In addition to extreme fatigue, chronic fatigue syndrome encompasses a wide range of other symptoms, including but not limited to, headaches, flu like symptoms and chronic pain.

If you suffer from CFS, Oriental medicine can help relieve many of your symptoms. Exceptional for relieving aches and pains, acupuncture and Oriental medicine treatments can help you avoid getting sick as often, and recover more quickly, as well as improve your vitality and stamina.

Research on Chronic Fatigue and Acupuncture

A study in China evaluated cupping as a treatment for chronic fatigue syndrome. All of the study patients complained of fatigue and some had additional problems with headaches, insomnia, muscle-joint pains, backaches and pains, poor memory, gastrointestinal disturbances, and bitter taste in their mouth, among others. Patients ranging in age from 28-54 received sliding cupping treatments twice a week for a total of 12 treatments. The results showed there was vast improvement in fatigue levels, insomnia, poor memory, spontaneous sweating, sore throat, profuse dreams, poor intake, abdominal distention, diarrhea, and alternating constipation and diarrhea.

In another study conducted at the First Affiliated Hospital of Guangzhou University of TCM in Guangzhou, China, subjects with chronic fatigue syndrome were evenly divided by random selection into an acupuncture group and a control group. The observation group was treated with acupuncture and the control group was treated with an injection. Participants completed a fatigue scale and results showed that people who received acupuncture reported significantly more relief from their symptoms. A similar study conducted in Hong Kong gave half of the group conventional needle acupuncture and half (the control group) sham acupuncture. Again, using a fatigue scale, improvements in physical and mental fatigue were significantly bigger in the acupuncture group and no adverse events occurred.

Most significantly, 28 papers were statistically reviewed through a meta analysis in order to assess the success of acupuncture as a therapy for CFS. The results showed that treatment groups receiving acupuncture for chronic fatigue syndrome had superior results when compared with control groups. Rightly, they concluded that acupuncture therapy is effective for chronic fatigue syndrome and that it does merit additional research.

If you are struggling with chronic fatigue syndrome call today to see how acupuncture and Oriental medicine can be incorporated into your treatment plan!

Ambiance

Make your bedroom a sanctuary. Keep it dark, cool, and quiet. Angle the clock face away from the bed. If you get up to use the bathroom during the night, don't turn on the light; use a nightlight to safely guide you. The optimal temperature for sleep is 60 to 68 degrees Fahrenheit.

When Hungry

Avoid heavy meals and sugary or high grain snacks before bed. They will raise your blood sugar and make it difficult to fall asleep.

Reduce nicotine, caffeine and alcohol use.

If you are hungry, eat a high protein snack a couple of hours before going to bed. Try yogurt, a banana or half of a turkey sandwich.

Reduce Late Night Activity

Stop working at least an hour before you plan to go to bed. Let your mind relax. Limit television and computer use in the evening.

If you want to read in bed, avoid backlit devices as the light stimulates the brain. Read a book or use a device that requires you to use a separate, soft light source.

DIABETES: The Silent Epidemic

Diabetes is called the 'silent' epidemic because so many people have no idea they have elevated blood sugar levels until the imbalance has progressed into a clinical diagnosis of diabetes. Even if a patient gets annual physical exams and has blood tests, physicians often don't detect the blood sugar changes, or don't utilize the correct blood tests, and often don't know what to tell their patients to do to manage blood sugar problems before they develop into diabetes.

I refer to diabetes as an 'epidemic' because the number of people who are diagnosed with diabetes or prediabetes is increasing at an alarmingly fast rate. According to the USA's diabetes fact sheet, 26 million children and adults in the US currently have diabetes and an estimated 79 million more have prediabetes, the condition which precedes a formal diagnosis. That means that 1 out of 3 Americans has seriously elevated blood sugar levels and the health risks that go along with it.

Prediabetes doesn't sound serious. In fact, many doctors describe it as having blood sugar that's a little high. But in fact prediabetes causes many of the same complications as diabetes, including heart disease, impaired vision, slow-healing wounds, kidney disease, dementia, Alzheimers disease, and chronic infections.

While diabetes involves elevated blood sugar levels and insulin (a hormone that regulates carbohydrate and fat metabolism), there are several forms of the illness. In type 1 diabetes, the pancreas does not produce insulin. The beta cells of the pancreas, where insulin is made and secreted, are damaged. According to conventional medicine, the cause of this damage is unknown.

Type 1 used to be called juvenile diabetes because it usually afflicts children and young adults. These diabetics must inject themselves with insulin to regulate their blood sugar levels. Treatment with insulin as well as diet and exercise begins as soon as the patient is diagnosed.

Type 2 diabetes, formerly known as adult-onset diabetes (or non-insulin dependent), is by far the most common form of diabetes. Either the pancreas doesn't make enough insulin to convert blood sugar to energy or the body's cells cannot absorb and utilize the insulin available. This is a condition known as insulin resistance.

In many cases, type 2 diabetes can be controlled or improved through diet, exercise, and lifestyle changes without the need for medication. The medications that are prescribed for type 2 diabetes help patients improve their cells' sensitivity to insulin, or they improve the ability to make insulin. The same effects can be achieved in many cases and in a safer fashion with dietary changes, herbs, exercise and nutritional supplements.

Type 3 diabetes, also known as 'brain' diabetes, was discovered in 2005 at Brown University Medical School. In this type, protein plaque resulting from elevated blood sugar in the brain results in memory loss and other symptoms of Alzheimer's disease. Many researchers now consider elevated blood sugar a leading risk factor for dementia.

Gestational diabetes occurs during pregnancy in some women who have no history of diabetes. Elevated blood sugar levels usually return to normal soon after delivery, though a history of gestational diabetes is considered a risk factor for future type 2 diabetes in both these mothers and their children.

Bedtime Routine

Establish a relaxing routine as you prepare for bed. Try to go to bed and get up at the same time everyday, even on weekends.

Relax by taking a hot shower, practicing mediation, or try progressive muscle relaxation, starting at your toes and working up to the top of the head.

It is important to leave the day's worries behind. Do not over-think your day while you lie in bed. Take a deep breath, clear your mind, and drift into a state of restful sleep.

According to many sources the most effective way to improve blood sugar and overall health is by reducing our consumption of carbohydrates. In contrast, the American Diabetes Association recommends consuming a high-carbohydrate, low-fat diet and controlling blood sugar levels with insulin and other drugs. Most patients find it difficult or impossible to lose weight on such a diet, which keeps blood sugar levels so elevated that diabetes complications are inevitable.

Some of the most dramatic improvements with diabetics, including a return to normal blood sugar levels without the need for medication, come with low carbohydrate diets that are moderate in protein and high in fat, especially saturated fat. Many say the optimum amount of carbohydrate consumed in one way should be no more than 60 grams. Some authorities say even less.

If you are already diabetic, especially type 2 or type 3, you'll want to take a look at your total daily carbohydrate intake to determine how much you're consuming. Many cases of diabetes are curable and reversible with diet, exercise, and lifestyle modifications. At the very least, it is often possible to reduce the number and amount of diabetes medications needed.

To your continued good health!

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