

Better Sleep & Stress Less: Knowledge Bites with Lauren Lee

What is insomnia?

One or more of the following symptoms for at least 3 months:

- Difficulty falling asleep (sleep onset)
- Difficulty staying asleep (sleep maintenance)
- Waking up too early
- Non-restorative sleep (unrefreshed)

Common daytime impacts of insomnia

- Fatigue or low energy
- Low motivation
- Cognitive - difficulty concentrating, poor memory, decreased efficiency
- Psychological - anxiety, irritability, depression
- Physical - headaches, muscular aches, gastrointestinal symptoms

Causes of insomnia

- Lifestyle: poor sleep hygiene, environmental, irregular sleep-wake schedule, stress
- Substances & medications: alcohol, caffeine, amphetamines
- Medical conditions: menopause, arthritis, IBS
- Psychiatric: ADHD, PTSD, anxiety, depression

Symptoms of stress

- Poor sleep
- Weight management issues
- Gut microbial imbalance
- Thyroid and sex hormone imbalance

- Inflammation - brain health

Investigative Testing

- Thyroid Profile - TSH, fT4, fT3
- Female Hormones - DHEAs, E2, progesterone, testosterone
- Nutrients - iron study, vitamin D, B12, folate, zinc: copper
- Sleep Profile - cortisol (12-2am), melatonin (12-2am)
- Hair Tissue Mineral Analysis - nutrients (e.g., magnesium, calcium, zinc), organ function (e.g., adrenals, thyroid, gastrointestinal, metabolism), heavy metals

Diet suggestions

- *Small and regular* meals throughout the day to maintain blood sugar levels.
- Easily digestible *protein* (e.g., white fish, chicken, eggs, chickpeas, mungbean), *whole grains*, and *essential fatty acids* (e.g., fish, nuts and seeds, extra virgin olive oil, avocado) at night to allow sufficient relaxation to initiate and sustain sleep.
- *Avoid stimulants* at night (e.g., coffee, green tea, black tea, chocolate, sugar, artificial sweeteners) that excite the nervous system and impact sleep quality.
- *Eliminate food allergies or intolerances.*



Sample Diet: What to eat and why...

<i>Breakfast</i> Avocado, goat's feta, and boiled eggs on sourdough bread	Balance of essential fatty acids, protein, and carbohydrates for blood sugar control and energy.
<i>Lunch</i> Teriyaki marinated chicken with stir fried zucchini, baby spinach, and carrot and brown rice	Chicken is a source of B vitamins and amino acids, whilst spinach provides magnesium; both nutrients help produce serotonin (regulates sleep). Brown rice is slowly digested which stabilises blood sugar levels and energy throughout the afternoon.
<i>Dinner</i> Salmon marinated with italian herbs and extra virgin olive oil, with garlic tossed broccolini and soba noodles	Salmon is a great protein source that is rich in the amino acid tryptophan (which helps promote sleep) and omega-3 fatty acids. An easily digestible and light meal that helps to promote deep sleep.
<i>Snacks</i> A handful of unsalted walnuts; Apple wedges with peanut butter	Source of essential fatty acids for cognitive health and blood sugar regulation.
<i>Beverages</i> Filtered water (1.5-2L) Chamomile tea after meals	Hydration, improves digestion and calming for the nervous system. Limit caffeine, sugar or alcohol at night.

Notes:



INTEGRATIVE WOMEN'S HEALTH CLINIC

PELVIC HEALTH PHYSIOTHERAPY

NATUROPATHY & NUTRITION

MASSAGE THERAPY

CLINICAL EXERCISE FOR WOMEN

Nutrient & Herb: Current Research

- Magnesium
 - Relaxant action, cofactor
 - A study involving 46 participants who were prescribed 500mg/day of magnesium for 8 weeks demonstrated decreased serum cortisol levels within hours of sleep initiation, resulting in increased slow-wave sleep and improved sleep quality. PMID: 23853635
- B vitamins
 - Supports a healthy nervous system, & energy production
 - A systematic review and meta-analysis involving 18 articles reported that B vitamins provided a reduction in stress and improved mood. doi: 10.3390/nu11092232
- Passionflower
 - Sedative action. Improvement in sleep disturbances, including positive effects on sleep quality and maintenance. doi:10.1159/000464342
- Withania
 - Reduces perceived stress and serum cortisol levels. doi:10.1177/2156587216641830

Please consult with your practitioner before considering supplementation to consider

individual medical history, medications, and/or allergies.

Lifestyle suggestions

- Sleep-wake regulation
 - Regular sleep and wake times
 - Avoid snoozing
 - Avoid napping (if needed, limit to 10-15 minutes)
 - Movement during the day
 - Exposure to daylight
- Sleep-promotion
 - Last meal 2-3 hours before bed
 - Supportive and clean mattress
 - Minimise blue light exposure (e.g., TV, phones, laptops)
 - Ventilated sleeping space (e.g., open window, fan, air purifier with HEPA cleaner)
 - Limit caffeine (chocolate, energy drinks, coffee, green tea) and alcohol
 - Limit vigorous exercise before bed
 - Set a 60 minute 'wind down' period before bed to relax (e.g., reading, guided meditation, warm bath, herbal tea, 4-7-8 breathing)
- Stress management
 - Conscious & deep breathing
 - Exercise (gentle vs. intense)
 - Psychologist or counselor
 - Hobby: _____