



SLEEP IN HEAVENLY PEACE

Insomnia, often attributable to night sweats, often increases in menopause. As estrogen is used less frequently to treat menopausal symptoms this has become a more frequent complaint. Symptoms that seem unrelated such as lack of energy, trouble concentrating, difficulty problem solving, or changes in mood such as irritability and depression; may result from poor sleep quality. If restless sleep or these symptoms persist beyond a month, then you should schedule an appointment with your doctor to evaluate the cause of your insomnia.

Rarely serious underlying ailments exist, and honestly the majority of the time anxiety or other issues are responsible for insomnia. Prescription sleep medications used on a short-term basis or episodically can be quite helpful according to sleep specialists. Likewise [low dose estrogen](#) is highly effective in minimizing menopausal night sweats and hot flashes, removing these disruptive nuisances to sleep. Women often return commenting, "I feel like myself again." We initiate hormone treatment at the lowest effective dose. If using pills, we recommend taking them at bedtime to take advantage of peak blood levels. Alternatively we encourage the weekly hormone patch as an effective and safer delivery option.

Nevertheless, many menopausal women desire to manage insomnia naturally. Regardless of age here is a list of suggestions to help you:

- Maintain a consistent sleep and wake schedule, including weekends
- Establish a regular, relaxing bedtime routine (warm bath, reading, listening to music)
- Create a "sleep sanctuary" that is dark, quiet comfortable, & cool
- Use your bedroom for sleep and intimacy
- Avoid viewing TV, laptop computer in bed—brightly lighted screens
- Finish eating at least 2-3 hours before your bedtime
- Exercise regularly, but complete your workout at least 4hours before bedtime to unwind
- Avoid caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol close to bedtime
- Put your worries away at bedtime (acknowledging that you'll deal with them the next morning)
- If you can't sleep within 20 minutes, get up and go to another room: return when drowsy
- Avoid naps. If you must nap, limit it to less than 20 minutes, and complete it by early afternoon
- Try taking melatonin about 1 hour before bedtime

If these insomnia interventions do not help you awake feeling rested, then you should see your primary care physician. For instance, sleep apnea can be detected during a sleep study and treated. Sleep quality impacts your quality of life. A physician can help you get consistent, quality sleep so you can awake to enjoy meaningful days.

Wishing you good health!

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