

The Nature of Melatonin Supplements in Promoting Sleep

We live in extremely busy times. It seems that everywhere we go, people are never asleep. Businesses undertake 24-hour operations to cater to a more global market, while individuals don't hesitate to cross time zones and travel to another country either also for business reasons or for personal development. Body clocks are out of synch, schedules are warped, and the concept of night and day is confused. Because of this, most of us turn to medications to help us get some shut-eye. However, most of these drugs, because of their chemical content, contain toxic side effects—hence, the birth of natural remedies, like melatonin and calming teas, as alternative therapies. What is melatonin? Basically, it's the by-product of the pineal gland, which is the small pea-sized part of our neurological system that tells our bodies when it's time to shut down and rest. During the day, melatonin is weak, but during the night, it works at its peak. That's why sleep comes in the absence of daylight or any light source. However, since our lifestyles have altered our sleep-wake cycles, our bodies tend to forget how to differentiate night from day. People who work graveyard shifts, for instance, sleep during the day and feel very alert at night. But when these schedules suddenly turn 180 degrees, they find themselves dozing off in the middle of a task or falling prey to the lure of potentially dangerous energy drinks and other wake-up drugs. Natural pineal gland melatonin cannot cope with these sudden changes, so treatment makers have come up with a way to mimic the effect of melatonin to create a pharmacy-grade melatonin supplement. This supplement is available over the counter and is commonly used to treat jet lag discomforts. The recommendations on the use of pharmacy grade melatonin are mixed. Some studies advise against it because it leads to toxicity, but there are other researches that have found no ill results even if the participants have consumed 600 to 3,000 times the usual dosage, or around 6 grams. Common complaints against melatonin use include reaction lags and drowsiness, but this is quite understandable given the supplement's features. Doctors advise that melatonin be consumed only when you're about to go to bed or at night. To combat jet lag, users are told to take the supplement around thirty minutes before boarding the plane. It should be known that melatonin has major body clock resetting functions so it must not be ingested when not really necessary. How much melatonin an individual can take varies, but it usually begins at 1.5 to 3 milligrams and then increased as needed. In sum, melatonin, while a natural remedy, is still a drug, which should be taken in moderation. Because the Food and Drug Administration does not regulate alternative therapies, it would be prudent for you not to self-medicate but to consult the advice of a natural health expert or a doctor before deciding to take it. Disclaimer: This is not a substitute for medical advice. This is only for informational purpose. Seek the advice of your doctor before considering any course of treatment.

About the Author

The ownership of Pharmacies in New South Wales Australia is restricted to. Owners of pharmacies are required to notify the Pharmacy Board of any change.

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