



InspireHealth
INTEGRATIVE CANCER CARE

This Week, september 13 2012:



The power of sleep

Sleep is of vital importance during the healing process (1). Physical healing is maximized during sleep and therefore, adequate sleep promotes optimal healing. Research has shown that sleep interruption, especially working the "graveyard" shift, can increase the risk of developing cancer by up to 60% (2).

There are many ways to help create healthy, restful sleep, and almost all of them are very simple to do! One of the easiest ways to promote optimal sleeping is to turn off all bright lights after 9pm. There is evidence that light in the bedroom during sleep decreases melatonin production (3), an important hormone that supports optimal immune function. Melatonin, a natural hormone produced by our body at night, helps support healing. Melatonin is produced by the pineal gland, a light sensitive gland at the base of our brain. If we work night-shift (or if we go to bed late or sleep in a room that is not dark), our body's melatonin production is reduced.

This can negatively affect our immune system function (4). In order to optimize melatonin production, it is advisable to turn off

Sleep is extremely important for many facets of our functioning. Recent research has revealed what many of us have always known: sleep facilitates the learning process, lessens anxiety and lessens the risk of depression.

Here are some tips to help set you up for sleeping success!

1. Exercise regularly
2. Skip the daytime nap
3. Avoid caffeine
4. Go to bed by 10pm
5. Avoid watching TV right before bed
6. Read something calm or peaceful to help you relax
7. Wear socks to bed
8. Avoid drinking any fluids within 2 hours of going to bed
9. Avoid large meals within 3

all the bright lights in the house by 9pm (use dim lights if necessary) and to be in bed by 10pm. From an integrative medicine perspective, an hour of sleep before midnight is worth two hours of sleep after midnight, because sleep before midnight optimizes melatonin production.

hours of bedtime

10. Sleep in complete darkness or as close to it as possible

Footnotes

1. Patel M, Chipman J, Carlin BW, Shade D. Sleep in the intensive care unit setting. Crit Care Nurs Q. 2008 Oct-Dec;31(4):309-18

2. Davis S, Mirick DK, Stevens RG. Night shift work, light at night, and risk of breast cancer. J Natl Cancer Inst. 2001 Oct 17;93(20):1557-62.

3. Gooley JJ, Chamberlain K, Smith KA, Khalsa SB, Rajaratnam SM, Van Reen E, Zeitzer JM, Czeisler CA, Lockley SW. Exposure to Room Light before Bedtime Suppresses Melatonin Onset and Shortens Melatonin Duration in Humans. Journal of Endocrinology and Metabolism 2010 Dec 30

4. Gómez-González B, Domínguez-Salazar E, Hurtado-Alvarado G, Esqueda-Leon E, Santana-Miranda R, Rojas-Zamorano JA, Velázquez-Moctezuma J. Role of sleep in the regulation of the immune system and the pituitary hormones. Ann N Y Acad Sci. 2012 Jul;1261(1):97-106.

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