

# 7 SURPRISING CAUSES OF INSOMNIA



# Introduction

When people ask why they are not sleeping properly, often they don't know that although there are classic reasons for lack of sleep, there are other reasons that are not so common. These may be the reason behind your seemingly endless nights of staring into the darkness, wishing you could go to sleep.

It may be that your body is trying to tell you something and it helps to understand a little about the workings of the human body. With this understanding, you may just be able to get the sleep you have been longing for.

# Adrenal Exhaustion



The way that the human body works is quite logical. When you are at rest, your body is able to store energy and this energy is used when you perform an activity. If you have ever heard the expression “I am too tired to sleep” what the patient may be suffering from is adrenal exhaustion. If you can imagine the body being like a rechargeable battery, eventually that battery loses all power and can no longer be recharged.

Well that’s what happens to the body during adrenal exhaustion.

There's no energy. Thus, when someone gets involved in activities, energy is drained even further. It works out as something of a vicious circle. Those suffering from this often take what they believe to stimulate energy. For example, they may drink coffee.

The mistaken belief that this helps the energy levels fires up even more exhaustion because although coffee may appear to give someone energy, it doesn't. It simply drains the body of more energy because you work on the assumption there is more to be had from the coffee that you drank and this actually uses more energy than the energy gained from the coffee. In this case, the only way out of the vicious circle is to learn to relax.

Yoga and stretching exercises are the answer since when you stretch your muscles, you immediately allow more energy storage in your body. Adding to your supplementation of magnesium also helps because whereas calcium contracts the muscles, magnesium relaxes them enabling you to relax and thus gain energy. When your energy levels are normalized, you will be able to be active in the daytime and thus encourage correct sleep at night. Thus, you can see that the human body relies upon a balance of lifestyle that gives adequate rest and adequate output. When the output

outweighs the rest, then the result is adrenalin exhaustion.

## Side Effects of Medication



If you haven't been getting a decent night's sleep for a while, it is worth looking up the side effects of any medication that you may be taking. Quite often, medications hide a multiplicity of side effects and a common side effect is insomnia. Apart from upsetting your REM sleep which is the deep sleep that most people experience when sleeping normally, medications can also contain content such as caffeine and other stimulants which may just be stopping you from sleeping correctly.

If you feel that this is a cause, don't despair. Your doctor may be able to change the times that you take your medications or even given you equivalents without the added boosters, so that you see an improvement in your sleep.

Even if you see no link between your medications and your lack of sleep, it is worth mentioning it to the doctor since he will be qualified to explain alternative medications which may not have these side effects. You will commonly find that painkillers can contain caffeine and you may be prescribed an alternative if you find that you are in the habit of taking painkillers at night. Another way to combat this is to do gentle yoga exercises in the evening to relieve pain, so that your need for painkillers at bedtime is less.

Statins have been found to interrupt sleep though this does not apply to everyone taking them. These heart medications do carry warnings and if you are able to correct your problems by a change of medications or lifestyle, then this will help the sleep pattern to return.



Selective Serotonin Uptake Inhibitors used to treat those with depression can also encourage lack of sleep. Thus, it is recommended that you review the time of day that you take these medications and adjust this so that you introduce it in the mornings instead of taking them at night. If you also want to get a good night's sleep, it is advised that you take regular exercise. Many depressed people are inactive and it is a mixture of the SSUI and the inactivity that is causing the lack of sleep.

Cough medicines – Even though these can be bought over the counter, they have a tendency to contain alcohol. Since alcohol affects your REM sleep patterns, this could explain why you are unable to go to sleep and stay asleep.

# What You Eat and Drink



You may consider that you are being wise with your choices. However, how often do you eat supper? Undigested food can cause all kinds of problems from heartburn right the way through the spectrum to GERD and if you are in the habit of eating in the three hours before you go to bed, then it's time to change your habits. Any heavy amount of food is discouraged. However, if you want a light snack, this may be healthier than you think. A small and limited snack of crackers (which are carbohydrate) can trigger



the feel good hormone, serotonin that helps to promote healthy sleep.

You may also be inadvertently drinking drinks that have stimulants in them. Do look at your food labels because even cocoa style drinks can contain too much caffeine to be considered as a great alternative for at bedtime. Canned drinks are not the best choice for the evening and making your own chamomile tea can help you to relax sufficiently to sleep well. However, it's an acquired taste.

There are certain foods that are known to keep people awake and these should be avoided. For example, sports snacks such as French fries and potato crisps can throw the sleep cycle and should be avoided at night. Talking of snacking at night, avoid raw vegetables as these can play havoc with your digestive system, making it hard to go to sleep.

Another food to avoid is pepperoni, sausage or even bacon. What these foods do to your body is encourage the release of norepinephrine from the brain. This is used as a fight of flight

response to particularly low blood pressure and acts in a similar way to adrenaline – making it undesirable when you are trying to go to sleep. One of the most surprising of things that people eat in the evening is so high in caffeine that it positively screams out that you won't sleep. That's chocolate and the darker varieties that everyone purports to be healthy are the worst culprits, some having as much as 80 milligrams of caffeine.

You should limit the amount of alcohol that you drink before going to bed since alcohol suppresses REM movement of the eyes and may be a culprit when it comes to insomnia.

# Restless Leg Syndrome



When you mention this to insomniacs, often they smile in disbelief. They cannot see how moving your legs at night would stop you from being able to sleep properly. However, scientists have been working on finding out reasons why people with RLS have problems sleeping and have found that neurotransmitters called glutamate maybe the cause, since these were shown to be elevated in people with RLS. Stretch and exercise helps this, so yoga may have the answers for those suffering from R.L.S. Glutamate release from the brain is used to improve cognitive development and thus would be something a human being might

need if intending to study or learn something new. However, when needing to sleep, this neuro transmitter can make the mind too active and thus make sleep almost impossible.

People who suffer from sleep apnea have also been shown to elevate levels of glutamate. Zinc can help because this transforms glutamate into GABA which is what is needed in order to be able to relax. Coffee is also known to encourage Glutamate so if you do suffer from restless leg syndrome, it's particularly important that you avoid drinking coffee or taking medications containing caffeine at bedtime or within the hour before bedtime. There is much talk among professionals about what is best to help the Glutamate turn into GABA and there are very few clues. Nutritionists say to avoid eating mushrooms, parmesan cheese and green peas if you suffer from restless leg syndrome, although there are other professionals who say that the safest supplement that you can take is L-Theanine which is natural and comes from the leaves of tea. These supplements can be bought at a health food store of repute. Once you have an understanding of what's happening inside the body when restless leg syndrome occurs, it is fairly straightforward to diminish Glutamate and encourage more GABA. This in turn will relax the body and will help the sufferer to

overcome the obstacle of sleeping.

## Body Temperature



When you teach a baby to recognize the Circadian Clock, you are teaching that child the difference between night and day. Darkness is not the only indicator that the body should go into sleep mode. In fact, core body temperature plays a huge part. Your temperature is dictated by your sympathetic nervous system and there is some correlation between the activity of this system

and the way that you breathe. Apart from keeping the bedroom aired, therefore, doing breathing exercises helps the oxygen flow through the sympathetic nervous system and this helps to control the temperature of the body. Deep breathing, such as is done in yoga meditation can help in circumstances such as these, as this makes the sympathetic nervous system more efficient. You may not know it but it isn't just your lungs that process the air that you breathe. The sympathetic nervous system plays an important part in distributing oxygen but also in keeping the body temperature at a normal level.

I would also suggest that you use cotton based sheets, since these do not encourage sweat and will give you a fresher bed. Change sheets regularly and ensure that the room is aired on a daily basis. The sheets will also need airing to avoid anything that might give rise to breathing problems. If you use a duvet, be aware that summer duvets may be needed when temperatures rise and that natural content in a duvet can sometimes give rise to allergies. Thus, although synthetic duvets seem to be lesser in quality, they may actually provide a better quality of sleep, since they do not let off the allergens that are known to arise from feathers and other natural duvet fillings.



The actual bed linen that you use can make a difference to the quality of your sleep as well. Those non-iron sheets that you were so proud of owning are actually treated with formaldehyde and even washing the sheets is not going to stop the release of formaldehyde as this is a lifetime thing. As long as you use the sheets, formaldehyde release will happen and this can cause a lot of problems with your health, such as headaches, breathing problems and even insomnia. Thus, the sheets should always be 100 percent cotton. Another area that may be affecting the quality of your sleep is foam pillows. Avoid these because although they claim to be hypoallergenic, the basis for the manufacture of foam is oil. This is known to release vapors as the pillow warms up.

As a suggestion for the bedroom area of your home, make sure that you change your mattress on a regular basis. This may be affecting your overall temperature and your comfort levels. People who suffer from insomnia often find that the discomfort of the mattress is a contributing factor. Since we know that foams are derived from oil which releases vapors, try to choose good quality mattresses made of natural products.

The other area to look at is the furnishing that you have in the bedroom area. Those pieces of furniture made from particleboard are also emitting formaldehyde and that's not a healthy ingredient to add to the bedroom. Choose natural wood as it does not have the same effect. Keeping your sleep area simple, you should be able to make the bedroom a relaxing area and air it regularly to provide you with the right temperature in which to sleep.

## **Hyperthyroidism**



If the thyroid is hyperactive, it speeds up the heartbeat and makes the body hyper-active. This hyperactivity means that it is hard to relax. If you are hyperthyroid, this can be determined by a simple blood test and if you are already being treated for thyroid problems, it may mean that the medication you are taking is working too hard.

Typically, patients who are hypo-thyroid patients take Levothyroxine to speed up the activity of the thyroid. However, sometimes, these patients need to lower their dosage because the thyroid can swing the other way and become too active. A visit to your doctor will help in determining if this is the cause for your sleeplessness. Anti-thyroid medications can be taken by those who are not taking Levothyroxine to help to lower the activity of the thyroid. Why does it happen? It happens because the thyroid system is not working correctly and is leaking thyroid hormone into the body. Corrective measure are not difficult and normal sleep resumes once the hyperthyroidism is normalized.

Other pointers to the fact that you are suffering from

hyperthyroidism may be the following:

- Rapid heartbeat
- Loss of weight (otherwise unexplained)
- Nervousness
- Abnormal sensitivity to heat
- Trembling

All of these symptoms can of course come about because of other causes, but it makes sense to check the thyroid as a first measure since this can be corrected very easily once thyroid problems are diagnosed.

# Lack of Routine



You may be wondering how a lack of routine can affect your sleep patterns. The fact is that many people live alone and do not have any structure to their daytime activities. Of these, many will also be inactive – either through lifestyle choice or because of invalidity. Thus, when bedtime comes along for normal people, they don't see that it's important to keep any kind of routine. One patient who stayed up until 4 in the morning on a habitual basis could not understand his lack of sleep, though what he was doing was actually using up all of the energy in his system and making himself too tired to sleep. It is necessary that people do have some

form of routine in their lifestyle that includes:

- Rest
- Exercise
- Good nutrition

If any of these aspects is missing from the daily routine, then it may be impossible to sleep because the body is not ready for sleep. It's almost like fighting the natural circadian cycles and these need to be respected in order to remain healthy. Thus, it helps to have a set time to get up. It also helps to try to be active. The subject mentioned above was not active and spent much of his time on the Internet, thus not getting any exercise at all. The oxygen levels in his blood were low as a result of this lack of exercise.

Clinical trials have shown that people these days do not breathe in the correct way and that this affects the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> and O<sub>2</sub> in the brain. This can either cause insomnia or it can cause oversleeping and one of the best ways around it is a healthier lifestyle that includes exercise and breathing exercises. The cortical neurons of those subjects who do not breathe correctly



will be fired up and ready for action because what happens is that the subject hyperventilates. If you incorporate regular exercise and a lifestyle that has set times to get up and to go to bed, it is less likely to happen.

The other contributing factor here is that many people who live their lives in a sedentary manner also have habits that contribute to ill health, such as smoking and this encourages bad breathing habits as well. The body needs work, rest and play. It needs fresh air and sunshine and if you are finding that your life has no routine, introducing one will help you to overcome insomnia because you will be expending energy.

One of the best ways to overcome problems associated with breathing is to take yoga classes where you will be taught to breathe in rhythm with the movements of your body. People who take yoga classes also learn to breathe correctly in order to achieve meditation and this helps in the distribution of oxygen to the body as well as making you more aware of your own shortcomings as far as routine is concerned.

Over the past paragraphs, we have looked at areas within a human's life that they may not associate with sleep or insomnia. However, all of them are relevant and much can be done to improve the quality of sleep with a better understanding of what's interrupting it or stopping it from happening. From what you eat to how you breathe, your interaction with the world around you dictates how well you will sleep at night. Sometimes, getting back to basics helps you to avoid all the pitfalls of insomnia and start to enjoy good quality sleep at its best. The main rule of thumb, when looking for solutions to your sleep problems, is to learn to listen to the needs of your body. Once you do, you will be surprised at how responsive the body is to the changes you make.

Thus, sleep is possible, even for those to whom insomnia has become a part of everyday life. The human body has the technology to sleep. All you need to do is find out what's affecting its functioning and when you do, you will enjoy good quality sleep.

Now if you'd like to eliminate Insomnia from your life and get a good night rest – I recommend you to check out this complete Blueprint!