

The naturopathic advisor



Naturally Good Health has teamed up with experts from the College of Naturopathic Medicine to answer some of your burning health questions. This issue, you asked:

Q What can I do to improve my sleep pattern naturally without taking medication?

Insomnia is not only the inability to fall asleep; it also encompasses an inability to stay asleep and/or repeatedly waking up earlier than planned. Sleep is essential to our physical health and emotional wellbeing. Sleep loss takes a toll on mood, energy, efficiency, ability to handle stress and can result in poor health, accidents and impaired job performance.

Dietary factors, stress, illnesses, medications and physical pain are some factors that contribute to insomnia. Lifestyle choices can make an impact to our sleep quality.



- Avoid/reduce stimulants, such as alcohol, caffeine, tobacco, sugar, refined carbohydrates and red wine. These may induce sleep initially but they invariably disrupt deeper sleep cycles later.
- Eat tryptophan rich foods such as bananas, dates, figs, nut butters, and turkey. Tryptophan is an amino

acid, which converts to serotonin and melatonin, compounds which induce sleep.

- Eat protein with every meal to sustain energy throughout the day.
- Avoid large meals two hours before bedtime.
- Keep a regular sleep-wake schedule, even at the weekends.

You will feel more refreshed and energised than if you sleep the same number of hours at different times.

- Exercise regularly to tire your body and promote sleep; avoid exercising in the evening or before bedtime.
- Have a leisurely bath before bed, add 10 drops of lavender/ chamomile oil and Epsom salts for relaxation.
- Drink herbal teas; chamomile and lavender teas aid relaxation, promoting sleep.



Your question has been answered by Nutritional Therapist and College of Naturopathic Medicine graduate, Jacqueline Ryan, who specialises in digestive and skin health. For information on CNM training in a range of natural health therapies, available in Ireland and beyond, visit www.naturopathy.ie