

Conclusions

Sleep is a vital need for humans as it is the time when the body rests, repairs, and rejuvenates itself. A healthy body, a sound mind, and a happy spirit are not possible without rejuvenating sleep. Sleep deprivation and insomnia are reaching epidemic proportions amongst city dwellers marching toe to toe with epidemics of obesity, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease. The prevailing culture of urban societies that sleep time is equivalent to wasted time has a significant contribution to this epidemic. Sleep deprivation and insomnia compromise productivity and performance, and adversely affect practically every organ system in the body.

No medication in the world that will give natural sleep to an individual. The good news, however, is that natural therapies can work well for the two most common causes of insomnia:

- Adjustment insomnia secondary to anxiety, stress, and mental anguish
- Sleep deprivation insomnia of disordered sleep habit

To be able to understand natural therapies, one has to be familiar with the science of sleep. The two systems drive the daily rhythms of the sleep-wake cycle. The homeostatic system initiates sleep, and the circadian system maintains deep rejuvenating sleep. The chemical adenosine produced during everyday activity starts the process of sleep. The hormone melatonin that supports deep rejuvenating sleep gets produced in the brain in response to sunlight or bright daylight signal. The two systems work in harmony to create a healthy sleep-wake cycle. The quality of sleep is a function of the four different stages of the sleep cycle, which must run in a proper order to produce deep rejuvenating sleep.

Human attitudes and behaviors are the most common reason for the disruption of the natural sleep-wake cycle as well as sleep quality. Natural solutions to reclaim rejuvenating sleep require three essential strategies:

1. Normalize 24-hour circadian sleep-wake cycle.
2. Cultivate a healthy attitude and behavior towards a restful sleep.
3. Practice good sleep hygiene.

Sleep medications are poor options for the most common forms of insomnia. These cannot mimic natural sleep, are addicting, and have significant side effects.