



Melatonin

WHAT IS IT?

Melatonin is an antioxidant hormone made in the brain in response to darkness. Melatonin regulates certain genes within every cell of the body making it important in cellular antioxidation, cell repair, and regulation of cell growth. Melatonin is involved in sleep, circadian rhythm and the immune system of the body. It is naturally present in flax, orange bell peppers, walnuts, almonds, tomatoes, goji berries, tart cherries and raspberries.

Melatonin is suppressed by certain medications and by too much light at night. With the rise of 24-hour lights in our cities along with lights from electronics in our homes while we sleep, the health effects of insufficient melatonin are becoming more important.

WHO MIGHT CONSIDER TAKING THIS?

Melatonin has been found to be beneficial for:

- Jet lag
- Insomnia (both adults and children)
- Cancer survival
- Migraine and cluster headaches
- Alzheimers/Parkinson's
- Irritable bowel syndrome
- GERD
- Crohn's and Ulcerative Colitis
- Endometriosis
- PCOS
- Infertility
- PMS/PMDD

The most common complaint with melatonin is that it can increase dream intensity or grogginess in the morning. Typically these side effects can both be improved by decreasing the dosage. The most common mistake people make with melatonin is beginning at too high of a dosage. As it can cause sleepiness, taking melatonin at night is recommended.

Medication Interaction:

Melatonin can cancel out the effect of the blood pressure medications called calcium channel blockers (Nifedipine, Amlodipine). Please monitor your blood pressure closely and alert your doctor if you notice elevations if you take melatonin and a calcium channel blocker for high blood pressure.

PREPARATIONS AND DOSAGE

Dose and Formulations:

There are several forms of melatonin including capsules, timed-release capsules, gummies, or sublingual drops/sprays/tablets.

- **For helping to fall asleep or for jetlag:** Start with 0.5–1mg of an immediate release preparation up to 30 minutes before bed is generally best. Some do best taking it 2–3 hours before bedtime so if at first you find it doesn't work then try taking it earlier in the night before you increase the dose. Doses above 5mg don't seem to increase the effectiveness for helping fall asleep
- **To help stay asleep:** A timed-release (extended release or sustained release) form is best and usually comes in 1–3mg dosages. This ensures that the melatonin is released in the middle of the night to help reduce night time awakenings.
- **For improving cancer outcomes:** 20mg (only when added to chemo or radiotherapy)
- **Migraine headache:** 3–8mg
- **Cluster headache:** 10mg
- **IBS:** 3mg at night or 3mg at night and 5mg in morning
- **GERD:** 6mg at night
- **IBD (UC and Crohn's):** 5mg IR (only when added to current medications)
- **Endometriosis:** 10mg
- **PCOS:** 3–6mg
- **Infertility:** 3mg
- **PMS/PMDD:** 3mg
- **Alzheimer's:** 2.5–10mg
- **Parkinson's:** 10–20mg