

Eating for a Good Night's Sleep

by: Dr. Isaac Eliaz

What you eat can drastically affect how you sleep, so in order to get a good night's rest, it is essential to choose foods that calm your mind and body rather than those that stimulate you. Certain types of foods will naturally promote rest and relaxation, particularly those that contain tryptophan, the amino acid that the body uses to make serotonin, the neurotransmitter that slows nerve activity within your brain.

Tryptophan

Since tryptophan is a precursor of other neurotransmitters in your brain, including serotonin and melatonin, eating foods that are rich in tryptophan will help you feel relaxed and sleepy. Foods such as turkey, hummus, lentils, and kelp are naturally high in tryptophan and also contain nutrients that provide a host of other health benefits. In addition, bananas not only contain tryptophan, but also potassium and magnesium, which are natural muscle relaxants. Fresh and dried cherries are also one of the only natural food sources of melatonin.

Carbohydrates

Foods that are rich in starchy, high-glycemic carbohydrates may also promote better sleep, as they help to stimulate the release of insulin and tryptophan and cause these sleep-inducing substances to enter the brain. According to a study published in *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, carbohydrates that are on the high end of the glycemic index scale, meaning they increase the body's sugar levels rapidly, encourage sleep when eaten at least four hours before bedtime. Foods such as Jasmine rice, potatoes, carrots, corn, puffed cereal, and honey are some of the healthiest choices of simple carbohydrates.

Calcium

Calcium helps the brain use the tryptophan to manufacture melatonin. Certain combinations, such as whole-grain cereal with milk, a peanut butter sandwich, or crackers with cheese contain both carbohydrates and calcium that work together to relax the mind and body. Calcium itself is so beneficial in helping you sleep, as it is a natural muscle relaxant that can also help you manage stress levels.

Timing

Eating these various foods calms your nervous system and triggers a sleep-inducing hormonal response, helping you rest better at night. However, timing is everything, as eating a large meal too late or eating right before bed time can actually have the opposite effect and keep you up at night. It is best to eat these foods later in the day or at least one hour before bed time since it takes about one hour for tryptophan from food sources to reach the brain.

Above all else, it is important to avoid rich, heavy and high-fat foods within two hours of bed time, as they require a lot of work to digest, and may cause stomach trouble and heartburn. It is also wise to avoid drinking too many liquids, including water, juice, tea or other fluids, as this may result in frequent bathroom trips throughout the night. Caffeinated drinks, such as soda, coffee or caffeinated teas not only act as diuretics, but will also keep you stimulated and make falling asleep that much more difficult.



Electronic Medical Records Listing The Various Advantages

by: Activemds

The modern age is the digital age and an increasing number of people are storing data and information using digital technology. Even though the concept of electronic medical records was initiated no less than 40 years back, it is only in the recent years that people have really understood the significance of this revolutionary way of storing the medical records of a patient. Listed below are some common advantages that this system provides over the traditional method of storing medical records on paper.

Storing medical records electronically tends to reduce the errors which are a common problem in case of paper records. In addition to being more accurate and correctly spelled, electronic records are free from the hiccup of illegibility and use of differing terminologies.

While paper records tend to get easily lost, destroyed or fade away with time, electronic medical records do not suffer from any such drawbacks. Not only are these records helpful in maintaining even the minutest details about patients' health, but they can be easily stored for decades, which is quite difficult with paper records.

Maintenance is another issue that plagues medical records stored on paper. Not only do such records take up much storage space, it is also difficult to send bulk records from one place to another. On the other hand, bulk medical records can easily be stored on a small disk which in an electronic system. Not only is it easy to upload the data on the internet but the disk can also be carried around without much inconvenience.

Maintaining electronic records can help save lives as doctors can refer to similar cases instantly and look for possible treatments that can be started immediately. In case of paper records, much precious time would be wasted in only finding a similar case.

How Laughter Heals

by: Darrin Haley

We have all heard that laughter is the best medicine since we were children. But could there really be some hard truth to this? Is laughter and positive emotion the key to curing and helping diseases like cancer and AIDs? Dr. Candace Pert's research on neuropeptides seems to suggest that this is in fact a very strong possibility.

Peptides are amino acids, the building blocks of proteins, wired together and found all throughout the body. Neuropeptides are peptides controlled by the brain and are responsible for any type of communication throughout the body: brain to body, body to body, brain to brain, or body back to the brain. From this information, one can see that neuropeptides are a major part of body functions.

All cells throughout the body use receptors that take in neuropeptides. Because immune cells receive neuropeptides like other cells in order to function, one can see the great effect neuropeptides have on a person's health specifically due to the amount of neuropeptides at a site directly affecting the strength of the immune cell.

Pert's research on neuropeptides has also shown that emotions influence the number of neuropeptides at a cell receptor site. The more positive emotions a person feels, the more neuropeptides are at an immune cell receptor site. Similarly, if a person has strong negative emotions, there will be fewer neuropeptides at the receptor site.

Is laughter and positive emotion the key to curing and helping diseases like cancer and AIDs?



To this extent, in order to keep from getting sick, one should try to feel positive emotions every day and lead a more positive life. Consequently, repression of negative emotions also reduces the number of neuropeptides at a receptor site; therefore, one should not merely ignore their negative emotions but rather mend their negative feelings so they can feel positive emotion again. There is also some evidence that positive emotions could help people recover from more serious illnesses such as AIDs and cancers. On this point, one should encourage people with these illnesses to be more optimistic and positive rather than give up and feel negative emotions. In doing this, they will improve their chances of getting healthy again because they will allow more neuropeptides to locate to their immune cell receptor sites.

Reference

McGhee, P. E. (1999). Emotion: The key to the mind's influence on health.

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BHPI Calendar of Events

MARCH

National Sleep Awareness Week (3/2-9)
World Down Syndrome Day (3/21)

APRIL

National Autism Awareness Month
Alcohol Awareness Month

April 9

NSO

60th Anniversary Gala & Fundraiser
(313) 961-4890

April 16

The Guidance Center

Downriver Dash 5K Run/Walk
(734) 785-7700

MAY

May 18

BHPI

Mental Health Matters
Eastern Market, Shed 5, Detroit
4pm-7pm
(313) 656-0000

National Mental Health Month
Dementia Awareness Week (18-24)



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