



Sound Sleep is Paramount to a Sound Mind

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THE IMPORTANCE OF SLEEP ON BRAIN HEALTH

The latest research on the importance of sleep for brain health showed that an average adult needs at least 7.5 hours of sleep. During sleep, your brain does not just go “off-line.” Special channels open up in your brain only during sleep. Increasingly, research has shown these channels support vital functions like detoxification (freeing our bodies of metabolic wastes and harmful substances) and clearing our bodies of pro-inflammatory molecules, including interleukins and cortisol, that negatively affect our brains. Sleep also helps modulate our immune responses. Brain-Derived Growth Factor (BDNF) is released during sleep, which is critical for consolidating learning and memory.

DO YOU HAVE A DEPENDENCY ON SLEEPING PILLS?

Due to the potential for dependency and adverse cognitive side effects of many sleeping pills, I always look for the root causes of insomnia instead of attempting a quick fix by prescribing a sleeping pill. Inadequate progesterone, elevated cortisol in the evening time and neurotransmitter imbalance are just some of the treatable factors that a neurologist using integrative holistic approaches can use to restore sound sleep without resorting to often prescribed and potentially addictive pills.

As many of you know, many sleep aids work less effectively over time, and you find yourself wide awake in the early morning wee hours. Most of you will discover that over time, you lose your ability to fall asleep naturally. This is not only frustrating but very alarming.

ARE SLEEPING PILLS HARMFUL?

Increasing your sleeping pill dosage is not the answer, as it only perpetuates a vicious cycle! Most of the prescribed sleep-aids belong to a class of pharmaceuticals called sedative-hypnotics, and they do not correct the underlying causes of poor sleep. The goal of “big pharma” is to sell more drugs to increase their profit. Not only that, many sleep aids disrupt REM sleep, which is an important sleep stage for a true restorative brain

reboot. Many antidepressants also suppress REM sleep. Sedatives like Ativan, Xanax or Valium all belong to a class called benzodiazepines. These medications, when taken long term, impose negative effects on your cognitive faculty, especially your ability to react quickly and/or process complex information efficiently.

By utilizing state-of-the-art functional metabolic testing, including stress hormone, neurotransmitter analysis and insulin resistance, I am able to target and correct the root causes of my clients’ sleep problems and help them wean off sleeping pills. As a licensed M.D. neurologist, I often can negotiate and utilize health insurances to cover many of these high-end tests that may greatly reduce your out-of-pocket costs.

Dr. Eva Henry is board-certified in Neurology and Anti-Aging, Regenerative Medicine. Her passion is to utilize an integrative approach to prevent and treat neurological illnesses.

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