Melatonin is a hormone produced by the pineal gland located in the brain. It plays a vitally important role in controlling the body’s circadian rhythm and, thus, the wake/sleep cycle. Normal melatonin secretion is suppressed by light and stimulated by periods of darkness. Nocturnal secretion of melatonin is at its highest during childhood, and then decreases with age. Supplemental intake of melatonin has been shown to regulate circadian rhythm in individuals who have disrupted sleep patterns.[1,3] More recently, research has shown that melatonin also functions as an important antioxidant, and is involved in the body’s immune response.[4,5]

**Effect on Sleep Patterns**

Melatonin is best known for its ability to help regulate sleep patterns and promote a restful night’s sleep. Research indicates that low levels of melatonin may be a frequent cause of insomnia in the elderly. A review of several studies suggests that melatonin supplementation can be helpful in inducing and maintaining sleep in patients suffering from insomnia, particularly when the pineal gland’s own production is very low.[6] Additionally, individuals who have unusual work hours, such as night shift workers, or people experiencing jet lag, in particular those who regularly travel across time zones, may benefit from melatonin supplementation.[7,8] Melatonin may also be helpful in treating circadian rhythm sleep disorders in blind people lacking light perception.[9]

**Sleeplessness**

Studies on the effects of melatonin in patients with insomnia have demonstrated improvements in overall sleep activity.[6] Reported improvements include the ability to fall asleep faster, fewer nighttime awakenings, and increases in sleep efficiency (percent of time asleep to total time in bed). In one study, sleep onset and sleep maintenance were improved in elderly people with insomnia following one week of supplementation. Patients given a sustained-released preparation experienced further improvements in sleep onset over a two-month period.[11] Melatonin has also been shown to benefit medically ill hospitalized patients with insomnia. Patients given melatonin fell asleep faster and slept longer than those given placebo.[12]

**Jet Lag**

Jet lag is due to the desynchronization between various body rhythms and environmental rhythm as a result of traveling across time zones. Individuals with jet lag may experience disturbed sleep, increased irritability, as well as difficulties in falling to sleep and maintaining restful sleep. Melatonin supplementation may help to alleviate or prevent jet lag by helping to speed up the shifting of the body clock from the time zone to the next.
A review of 10 trials of which nine compared melatonin with placebo and one with the drug zopidem, a hypnotic, found melatonin to be highly effective in preventing or reducing jet lag. Study subjects included airline passengers, airline staff, or military personnel. Daily doses between 0.5mg to 5mg taken at bedtime were found to be similarly effective at preventing or reducing jet lag, however the effects were greater at the higher dose. According to this review, doses higher than 5mg do not appear to demonstrate any increased benefit.

### References


### Caution:

Consult a licensed healthcare practitioner before use if you are pregnant or lactating, have an autoimmune disorder, depression or schizophrenia, or if you are taking drugs, especially tranquilizers, sedatives, antidepressants or drugs that alter pituitary-ovarian function. May alter pituitary-ovarian function, inhibit ovulation or uterine contractions. Monitor for residual drowsiness six to eight hours after taking this formula. Do not take when operating machinery, driving a vehicle or when consuming alcohol.

*These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease.*

**DOSAGE:**

Take 1 tablet 1/2 to 1 hour before bedtime, or as directed by your healthcare practitioner.