

MENOPAUSE & SLEEP

Changes in hormone levels as we age can cause sleep disturbances, and sleep disturbances can alter hormone levels, turning into a vicious cycle.

Sleeplessness can affect around 10 different hormones and shifts in these hormones can cause changes in appetite, mental wellbeing, cardiac health and even fertility.

Menopause and insomnia

Many people will experience bouts of insomnia from time to time, but menopause-related insomnia can stretch on for weeks, months or even years if not properly treated.

In peri- and post-menopause, many women have trouble getting to sleep and/or staying asleep. This can be accompanied by hot flushes which can cause more awakenings, restless legs syndrome, nocturia (get up at night to pee) and sleep disordered breathing such as obstructive sleep apnoea.

Not getting enough good sleep can affect all areas of life and sleep issues are often accompanied with low mood, anxiety and fatigue to name a few.

How to sleep better during menopause

- Maintain a regular sleep pattern and ensure there is sufficient time to wind down before bed
- Keep a cool temperature in the bedroom and use light, cotton bed linen and/or nightwear
- Try not to raise body temperature before bed so steer clear of large, late night meals, spicy food and alcohol
- Eat a healthy balanced diet
- Exercise regularly
- Give up smoking
- Practice relaxation techniques, meditation or mindfulness to help reduce stress and worry
- See your GP for advice and further treatment such as hormone replacement therapy (HRT) if insomnia continues, and impacts significantly in your daily life

With thanks to Dr Theodora Kalentzi - member of our 'The Sleep Council' Advisory Board.

For more information and advice, visit The Sleep Charity at thesleepcharity.org.uk or contact us on info@thesleepcharity.org.uk