

INSOMNIA [NIDRANASHA]



Tagara

Further information can be obtained from :

Director General
Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences
No. 61-65, Institutional Area, Opp. 'D'-Block, Janakpuri, New Delhi-110058
Telephone : +91-11-28525520/28524457, Fax : +91-11-28520748
E-mail : dg-ccras@nic.in
Website : www.ccras.nic.in
www.indianmedicine.nic.in

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CENTRAL COUNCIL FOR RESEARCH IN AYURVEDIC SCIENCES
Ministry of AYUSH
(Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy)
Government of India

What is Insomnia?

Happiness, mental functions, vigor, strength, potency and performance of the individual are largely influenced, if the sleep is disturbed. Inability to sleep, in the absence of external impediments, such as uncomfortable surroundings, noise, bright light etc. during the period when one should sleep to relieve the tiredness, is called Insomnia. Disturbance of sleep may vary in degree from restlessness or shallow interrupted sleep to a short span of sleep, dreamful sleep or to absolute wakefulness. Insomnia becomes a serious problem when it affects behaviour, mood and physical as well as mental performance.

Ayurveda considers predominance of *Tama* and *Kapha* as the attributor to the quality and duration of sleep. Physico-psychological conditions, whether as a result of erratic lifestyle or due to any disease, leading to aggravation of *Vata* and *Rajas*, adversely affect the sleep pattern and quality. Continuance of this phenomenon for a longer time causes insomnia and various sleep disorders.

What is the impact of Insomnia?

Apart from general indisposition resulting from inadequate rest, continued sleeplessness may cause any one or more of the following health problems:-

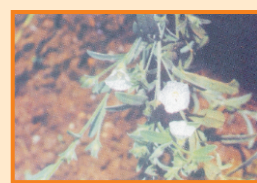
- Headache
- Body-ache
- Restlessness
- Loss of appetite
- Constipation
- Dryness of skin
- Irritability
- Inadequate mental attention & concentration
- Behaviour and mood changes



Jatamansi



Ashwagandha



Shankhapushpi

How Ayurveda manages insomnia?

Ayurveda takes holistic view towards managing sleep disorders. Treatment plan is worked out on the basis of underlying cause of insomnia and its clinical manifestations. Body-mind constitution i.e. *Prakriti* of the individual is ideally taken in to consideration for prescribing lifestyle guidelines that help

to bring about psycho-physical relaxation leading to gradual improvement in the quality and duration of sleep. Need-based package treatment with the following measures is recommended for successful management of insomnia and related disorders-

- a) Regulation of lifestyle including diet, emotions, physical activities, behaviour and sleep time.
- b) Bio-purification and psycho-physical relaxation with *panchakarma* procedures.
- c) Treatment of underlying cause.
- d) Use of *Medhya Rasayana* and palliative medicines as per medical advice.
- e) Khaskhas (Seeds of *Papaver somniferum*) with milk at bed time.
- f) Pippali mula (root of *Piper longum*) with guda
- g) Steamed Brinjal at bed time.
- h) Mukta Shukti Bhasma
- i) Yoga practices.

What are the useful medicinal plants for Insomnia?

- **Shankhapushpi** (*Convolvulus pluricaulis*)
- Jatamansi (*Nardostachys jatamansi*)
- Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*)
- Tagara (*Valeriana wallichii*)
- Sarpagandha (*Rauwolfia serpentina*)



Sarpagandha

Specific Do's and Don'ts

- Diet should be simple, nutritious and easily digestible
- Meals should be timely and dinner at least two hours before going to bed
- Avoid smoking, coffee, tea, alcoholic drinks and stimulants
- Avoid day sleeping, irregular and hectic daily routine, overexertion excessive sexual indulgence and aggressive behaviour
- Bed should be comfortable in accordance with the seasons and surroundings
- Positive thinking, peaceful & mentally relaxed attitude, walking after dinner, washing feet with warm water, head and feet massage and drinking milk, particularly buffalo milk at bed time, are advisable

Important Scientific References & Reading Material

- Astanga Samgraha translated by Prof. K.R. Srikantha Murthy, Chaukhambha Orientalia 1 edition, 1997.
- Dash N. C. et.al., "A Clinical Study on Nidranasa (Insomnia) and its management with Nidrodaya Rasa and Sirodhara". Journal of Research in Ayurveda and Siddha, Vol. XXIV, No. 3-4 (2003), PP 126-138.
- Sharma A.K. et.al., "Role of Shirodhara in the management of Anidra (Insomnia) and Chittodvega (Anxiety Neurosis) A Clinical Study". Journal of Research in Ayurveda and Siddha, Vol. XXIV, No. 3-4 (2003), PP 104-113.