



## Unlocking The Secrets To A

# Good Night's Sleep

Do you have difficulty falling asleep?

Do you end up tossing and turning in bed all night?

Do you have trouble maintaining your sleep throughout the night?

Do you find yourself waking up too early in the morning?

Do you experience drowsiness during the day as well as poor memory and concentration?

**I**f your answer is 'yes' to any of the above questions, try to find out the reason for your insomnia. In some cases, it can be treated through lifestyle changes and modifications to the environment and may not require the use of medication.

### "Why Can't I Get To Sleep?"

- \* Poor sleep habits and hygiene such as taking excessive caffeine or exercising too close to bedtime.
- \* Improper bedding - causing poor lower back support and discomfort.
- \* Excessive noise or bright lights in the surroundings.
- \* Presence of a chronic medical illness (e.g. arthritis, asthma, etc.) - causing discomfort in the night.
- \* Major life stresses or emotional upsets in the daytime.

### "How Can I Get A Good Night's Sleep?"

- \* Establish a regular sleep routine.
- \* Sleep enough (at least 8 hours) to feel refreshed the next day. Excessive sleep causes fragmented and shallow sleep.
- \* Modify the lights and sound settings in your bedroom, e.g. install carpet and curtains.

- \* Keep your bedroom temperature moderate. If it is too high or too low, it may disturb sleep.
- \* Exercise regularly to promote deep sleep.
- \* Avoid naps during the day.
- \* Avoid drinking too much water before sleep to prevent trips to bathroom during the night.
- \* Avoid excessive alcohol in the evening.
- \* Take a light snack before bedtime if you are hungry. Avoid eating heavy meals.
- \* Relax before bedtime, e.g. listen to soft music, do mild stretching or yoga.
- \* Avoid looking at the clock if you wake up and cannot get back to sleep during the night.
- \* If you don't fall asleep within 20 minutes, do something relaxing such as watching TV, listening to music or leisure reading. Return to bed when you feel drowsy. Repeat as required.

If you are unsure of the cause of your insomnia or if your condition persists despite modifying your lifestyle and environment, check with your doctor.

#### Reference

Lehne, R A, 2001, Pharmacology for Nursing Care, W.B. Saunders Company, USA.

Dement, W C & Vaughan, 1999, The Promise of Sleep: A Pioneer in Sleep Medicine Explores the Vital Connection between Health, Happiness and a Good Night's Sleep, Dell Trade Publishing, USA.