

Mugwort for Chronically Light Sleepers



JOPELKA/PHOTOS.COM

Do not self-medicate with mugwort. A herbalist can prescribe which herb works best for your specific type of insomnia.

BY LUKE HUGHES
FOR THE EPOCH TIMES

There are a number of herbs referred to as nervines (calming to the nervous system) and therefore listed as being effective for sleep disorders. While this may be true in part, I'm sure that many people have tried various proprietary herbal sleep mixes without gaining a complete and lasting return to a normal and healthy sleep pattern.

The reason for this is that while any given group of people may suffer from insomnia, the reasons for the condition and the types of insomnia that they suffer from will invariably differ from one person to the next.

The shotgun approach of prescribing a mix of nervines will often gain an improvement in the patient's condition, but those improvements will tend not to be deeply effective or long-lasting.

If real change is to occur, it is necessary that the particular type of insomnia the patient is suffering from be assessed. The nervine that is specific for that person can then be prescribed. While nervines will be prescribed together, there will always be one nervine that is specific for each person.

Mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*) is

not specific for the type of insomnia sufferers who cannot get to sleep. Rather, it is more for those who are chronically light sleepers.

To their partners, it may seem as though light sleepers are blissfully snoring away, but these people can usually recount every noise that was made throughout the night: the neighbours as they returned home after midnight or the cat that knocked over the garbage bin at 2 a.m.

Their bodies are asleep, but their minds never quite completely switch off. The mental fatigue that results can cause problems with concentration, and they often have difficulty with speech. It is not unusual for them to be written off as slow learners early on in life as a result.

Quite the opposite is the case for these types, however, as they are usually highly intelligent individuals whose linguistic clumsiness and apparent lack of concentration belie an incredibly agile and creative mind. It is usually not until the late teens or early 20s that the creative brilliance of these types becomes apparent.

Another characteristic is a highly developed awareness in the five senses. Bright lights will affect them, and they will often put on sunglasses before they go out the door.

Sound, smell, taste, and touch are also more sensitive than usual, and this overstimulation is a contributing

factor in their inability to turn off at night when it is time for truly restful sleep. Sleepwalking is also common in childhood and sometimes continues into adulthood.

For this type of person, mugwort is the herb that will bring a night of real sleep, with the accompanying energy that can be expected from being truly rested.

Mugwort is high in phosphates of magnesium, potassium, and calcium, which are essential for the health and resilience of the nervous system. Vitamin B6 is also present, making mugwort a nerve tonic and antispasmodic, as well as giving it a role in regulating pituitary and adrenal hormones.

Mugwort's affinity for the nervous system is utilised in traditional Chinese and Tibetan medicine in the practice of moxibustion. The moxa cones are made from the fluffy white underside of the mugwort leaf and are burned above the skin, either on a piece of ginger, salt, or on the tip of an acupuncture needle over an area of weakened nerve signal.

Do not self-medicate with this herb. A well-trained herbalist can prescribe the nervine that most fits your constitution, eliminating the need for the shotgun approach and large doses.

Luke Hughes is a classical Western herbalist and horticulturist based in Sydney, Australia.

“ To their partners, it may seem like they are blissfully snoring away, but these people can usually recount every noise that was made throughout the night: the neighbours as they returned home after midnight or the cat that knocked over the bin at 2 a.m.

”

DR HU'S HEALTH COLUMN



JOE MANIUE/GETTY IMAGES/PHOTO

Why Is My Child's Appetite So Poor?

BY DR HU NAIWEN
FOR THE EPOCH TIMES

Dr Hu Naiwen began his medical education in Western medicine, and subsequently began studying traditional Chinese medicine as well. He has since practised in Taipei for the past 30 years. Dr Hu's goal is to enable people to be free of illness and for ill patients to become less reliant on modern medicines. This column introduces traditional Chinese medicine methods of staying healthy and making lifestyle changes for a longer and healthier life.

Question: My five-year-old son has a poor appetite, and takes about 1 to 2 hours to finish one meal. Otherwise, he has always been healthy. He doesn't look pale or yellow, and he's very active. We started him on swimming lessons to improve his appetite, but after swimming he's still unwilling to eat.

Dr Hu: When a child has a poor appetite and is thin, but otherwise has a healthy skin tone and is active, one generally cannot say that he has an "illness".

One common reason for a poor appetite is that the child doesn't like chewing food with his teeth. There are two possible explanations for this: Firstly, the child's jaw muscles for chewing aren't active or strong enough; secondly, the child's teeth aren't strong enough yet.

The best solution is to strengthen the child's chewing muscles. But there aren't any effective exercises to strengthen the muscles, so in tra-

“ One common reason for a poor appetite is that the child doesn't like chewing food with his teeth.

ditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) we recommend medical treatment instead. Traditional Chinese physicians believe that the "spleen is the master of the muscles". So the remedies we use are for supplementing the spleen and stomach. Strengthening the spleen will strengthen the muscles as well, which will improve his chewing.

I suggest that you consult your physician to ask if your son can take this remedy called Fei Er Wan (Chubby Child Pill). Not only does the pill strengthen the spleen and stomach, it also removes roundworm, pinworm, and other parasites from the intestines. Another remedy to strengthen the spleen and stomach is Yigong San (Extraordinary Merit Powder), which will help strengthen the chewing muscles.

Question: My child is six years old. When he lies down to sleep, his nose often becomes blocked and he has to

breathe through his mouth. Moreover, he often grinds his teeth and sweats when deep in sleep.

Dr Hu: When a child has to breathe through his mouth for a long time, he'll inevitably find that his mouth becomes very dry and thirsty. That's because the air he breathes into his mouth and wind pipe hasn't been warmed and humidified beforehand, an important step that is usually completed by the nose.

As for grinding his teeth at night, this often stems from underlying anxiety. Perhaps the child has a competitive spirit and wants to be better than his peers in many things, so he gets anxious easily. Another possibility is that his parents or grandparents have high expectations of him, and he has high expectations of himself as well. Such people are most susceptible to teeth grinding, and may even damage their teeth from too much grinding.

In Traditional Chinese Medicine, a child who has these symptoms of blocked nose, mouth-breathing, and teeth-grinding is said to lack liver fire. Therefore, it is likely that a traditional Chinese physician will treat him with remedies that supplement the liver's fire.

In addition, night sweats – or sweating at night while asleep – is termed "robber sweat" in TCM. It reflects a weak Yin qi. By strengthening his Yin qi and getting rid of his anxiety, his sleep will dramatically improve.

Article provided by Traditional Chinese Culture and Arts Foundation, and adapted from Sound of Hope's programme "Dr Hu Naiwen's Hotline".

5 Herbal Teas for Good Health

BY HELENA ZHU
EPOCH TIMES STAFF

IN the heat of the summer, nothing is better than a cup of iced tea to cool the body off.

However, choosing the right tea is crucial, since different teas have different functions and properties.



FOTOLIA

noting that only the lemon itself has this effect, while its peel works the opposite way to increase pigmentation. Therefore some tea drinkers choose to remove the peel before slicing the lemon.

Choosing the right tea is crucial as different teas have different functions and properties



FOTOLIA

Peppermint Tea

Mint tea is a favourite among many tea drinkers, notably for its refreshing properties. However, that's not all it can do. It can soften the skin, relieve abdominal bloating, cool off the body, cure colds, and alleviate pain, even including toothaches.

You can make fresh peppermint tea at home by grinding fresh peppermint leaves and adding hot water.



EVGENY KARANDAEV

Lemon Tea

The lemon tea we are talking about is not the fountain drink you get at fast food chains. You can make this version of lemon tea by either squeezing lemon juice or cutting a lemon into slices into a cup of water, adding honey or sugar to taste.

Lemon can bring back lustre and elasticity to the skin and even out skin tone. You can think of it as a natural spot treatment. It is worth



ELENA SCHWEITZER/FOTOLIA

Chamomile Tea

Chamomile tea is a popular choice among tea drinkers around the world. Chamomile is effective in calming the mind to allow relaxation and stress relief. Unlike coffee and caffeinated teas, chamomile tea is naturally caffeine-free tea and in fact helps the drinker fall asleep. It is also effective for combating long-term insomnia through relaxing the mind and the body.



MACEO/FOTOLIA

Ginger Tea

While not a personal favourite for its taste, ginger tea is a natural remedy for fighting various ailments. Full of minerals and antioxidants, ginger relieves stress with its relaxing scent, fights respiratory sicknesses such as cold and cough, boosts immunity, and has anti-inflammatory properties that could be helpful for those who suffer from arthritis.

You can make ginger tea at home by peeling (optional if it is well washed) and slicing the ginger into small pieces, pouring boiled water into ginger slices, and add honey or sugar to taste.



FOTOLIA

Chinese Chrysanthemum Tea

This is a favourite of mine for a long time. As long as you can find it, the natural coolant eases the symptoms of cold, detoxifies the liver, lowers cholesterol levels, and soothes dark spot in the eye area and redness in the eyes.

Chrysanthemum tea is usually made from adding hot water to dried chrysanthemum flowers, which you could obtain from herbal tea shops or Chinatown.

It is good to note that even though it is tempting to make the tea with cold water, hot water brings out the properties of the tea much better, even if you cool the tea with ice afterward.