Sleep & Stress Supports for Cancer

www.DrJenGreen.com
www.KNOWoncology.org

The resources below are for educational purposes only and do not constitute medical advice. Please consult your cancer care providers before adding anything to your treatment plan. The KNOWoncology provider network lists evidence-informed integrative oncology providers for best guidance.

What does the research say?

Poor sleep quality and sleep disorders (such as insomnia) are a risk factor for all-cause and cancer-specific mortality in cancer survivors. Sleep disturbances are also linked to increased symptom burden, reduced quality of life, and may worsen cancer outcomes through effects on immune function and inflammation.

Sleep Hygiene:

- Go to bed and wake up at the same time each day (even on weekends). This helps regulate your body's internal clock.
- Create a relaxing bedtime routine to signal your body it's time to sleep. This may include activities like reading, light stretching, lavender baths or meditation.
- Keep your bedroom dark, quiet, and cool.
- Avoid electronics (TV, computers, phones, ipads) for 60 minutes before bed
- Avoid caffeine, alcohol, and intense exercise within 3 hrs of bedtime because these may interfere with sleep
- Some people find weighted blankets useful for calming the nervous system.
- Avoid working in bed so that your bed is strongly associated with only sleep and intimate activities
- If you can't fall asleep after about 20 minutes, get out of bed and do a calming activity until you feel sleepy
- People with cancer who participated in Forest Therapy (time in nature) had improved sleep

Melatonin is a good first line for people struggling with sleep because it has so much anti-cancer activity, and is routinely recommended even in people who already sleep well. However, a weakness of melatonin is that stress hormones like adrenaline and cortisol can override it and still cause you to wake in the middle of the night. If you are in chemotherapy for a solid tumor (eg. breast, colon, lung, brain), melatonin 20 mg is an excellent sleep support option that also improves response rates to

chemotherapy. Do not use melatonin if you have hematologic cancer (blood cancer) without speaking to your integrative provider. In a meta analysis of 8 RCTs in solid tumor cancers, 20mg melatonin nightly in conjunction with chemo or radiation significantly improved the complete & partial remission rate, decreased thrombocytopenia, neurotoxicity, and fatigue.In a second meta-analysis of 21 clinical trials in solid tumors, use of 20mg melatonin alongside chemotherapy improved survival, tumor response, and significantly reduced weakness, leucopenia, nausea and vomiting, hypotension, and thrombocytopenia.The ProThrivers Wellness Sleep product included in the Fullscript link below is designed for chemotherapy support and 2 caps contain melatonin 20 mg, magnesium glycinate 200mg (depleted by platinum chemotherapy), and magnolia for calming cortisol stress hormone. You may also opt for plain Melatonin 20 mg by Pure Encapsulations or Protocol for Life Balance.

Lemonbalm is a gentle, chemotherapy safe herb that calms anxiety, settles your stomach and helps improve sleep. It can be taken as tea, alcohol-free tincture, tincture or capsule.

Chamomile tea and extract reduces anxiety and improves sleep. Many other herbal teas also reduce stress, such as passionflower, tulsi/holy basil, lemonbalm and lavender.

The probiotic Lactobacillus casei Shirota helped maintain sleep quality during stress induced sleep disturbance.

Lavender nasal inhaler or a bath with 8-10 drops lavender essential oil or 5-8 drops lavender essential oil in a diffuser in the bedroom. In a randomized controlled trial, people going through chemotherapy who inhaled lavender essential oil had significantly less anxiety and better sleep. In two randomized controlled trials, people who inhaled lavender essential oil before cancer surgery had significantly less anxiety.

Sleep Aide by Vital Nutrients is a favorite of Dr Green's, but please consult your provider before using this to ensure that there won't be interactions with your medications. The lavender essential oil it contains in it is safe for breast cancer and has multiple trials showing its effectiveness in reducing anxiety. Sometimes you do burp a lavender smell though.

To purchase high quality products from a trustworthy company, you can sign up with Fullscript.com and access Dr Green's Sleep during Cancer suggestions.

Mind-Body Supports

- **Guided Imagery** harnesses the power of the mind to impact stress response, immune function and wellness. Visualizations/Guided Meditation for sleep: Dr Green's Sleep Guided Imagery is on Spotify/apple/amazon music. Other options include; https://healingworksfoundation.org/guided-imagery/a-guided-meditation-for-healthful-sleep/http

s://www.mskcc.org/cancer-care/diagnosis-treatment/symptom-management/integrative-medicine/sleep

- Netflix host's Headspace "Guide to Sleep"
- **Medical Hypnosis**: Dr Sebastian www.openhypnosis.org
- CES Ultra/Alpha Stim: These are two brands of electrical devices that clips on your ears and transmits alpha waves into your brain to alleviate fear and anxiety. It is an excellent tool for pre-surgical anxiety or stress management. It cannot be used with a pacemaker, but is safe to combine with any medications. More info: http://www.alpha-stim.com/alpha-stim-technology/anxiety/
- **Free Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction Programs**:https://vibe.emindful.com/programs/32 Online MBSR/Mindfulness (Free) (palousemindfulness.com) https://adventisthealthcareinc.app.neoncrm.com/nx/portal/neonevents/events?path=%2Fportal%2Fevents
- **Support Groups for Cancer**: One on one phone support: www.zimmermanangels.org, Online cancer support groups: http://www.cancercare.org, Commonweal Cancer Help Program - Commonweal

