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Melatonin: What does it do? What dose should you take? And how it is now being used for conditions like autism, cancer, cognitive function and immune support.

By Corey Schuler, DC, MS, LN

Dr. Corey Schuler is NHI's National Educator. Dr. Schuler is a practicing doctor of chiropractic, has a master's in clinical nutrition and botanical medicine, is a licensed nutritionist and holds certifications in acupuncture, kinesiology, holistic and functional medicine. He has held numerous education roles and currently teaches at the School of Applied Clinical Nutrition at New York Chiropractic College. In addition Dr Schuler held the position of Medical Educator at Emerson Ecologics the leading distributor to integrative practitioners in the US.

While melatonin has long been known to aid in sleep, a myriad of other functions now has been realized over just the last decade of research. Additionally, the daily dose of melatonin has been questioned and explored.

Melatonin, as a dietary supplement, comes in a variety of dosages from as high as 20mg to as low as 0.3mg. It is often synthetically produced or extracted from animal glands, however, bio-identical, non-synthetic forms from plants (vegetarian/vegan) now exist called Herbatonin. It also comes in immediate-release form or sustained-release, also referred to as slow-, controlled-, or time-release. Sustained-release appears to have less hypnotic or drowsiness effects than the immediate release but the benefits appear to be equal to or greater than the immediate-release form in relation to primary insomnia (that is sleeplessness not attributed a medical condition or medication).

Melatonin is a naturally occurring hormone produced in the human body, by the pineal gland, and secreted into the blood stream. The pineal gland produces between 0.5mg to 0.8mg of melatonin when we are younger and through our teens, with production leveling at approximately 0.3mg. However production can drop even lower due to diet, lifestyle or simply age, generally after 50 years of age.

People of all ages who are dealing with jet lag, shift work, and challenges to their circadian rhythm due to seasonal changes may also be affected by low melatonin levels. Research into the effects of melatonin on cancer, cognitive function, autism are now being conducted.

Melatonin is produced in response to darkness, as perceived by the retina of the eye. It is reduced by exposure to light and it appears from studies that artificial light may also contribute to the deterioration of a person's melatonin production and increased risk for disease.

More about the benefits of melatonin

Melatonin also works as an antioxidant, combating free radicals which can cause oxidative damage to our cells. Melatonin, uniquely, can also cross the blood-brain barrier, making it one of the most potent antioxidants in the brain. Most substances, including antioxidants that we consume, do not cross this barrier. Yet, the wisdom of nature has provided us the ability to manufacture this defense mechanism and may in part explain its benefit in cognitive diseases.

Melatonin has effects on the immune system, including some anti-carcinogenic properties. In 1991, Dr. Paolo Lissoni from Italy performed cancer research on patients with metastatic solid tumors and demonstrated that high doses of melatonin were effective in arresting tumor growth and improving quality of life markers. His group is considered the pioneers in this work and provided several reports on this dose throughout the 1990's with subsequent studies confirming his findings.





Studies have looked at how shift work, particularly that including night work, may be cancer-causing and may aggravate gastrointestinal and cardiovascular disease, complicate pregnancy, and interfere with drug therapy. Multiple studies, opinions, and guidelines have suggested melatonin as a primary therapeutic for improved health and sleep of shift workers.

Human studies using 0.3mg on elderly patients with mental illness have shown improvements with delirium (sudden severe confusion and rapid changes in brain function) as well as higher doses (2-10mg) for patients with autism. Both children and adults have been studied and research is ongoing at this time.

A number of conditions and medications have been shown to depress melatonin levels in the blood. Prostate cancer, breast cancer, autism, and epilepsy, anti-depressants, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), beta-blockers and calcium channel blockers for high blood pressure, caffeine, tobacco, and alcohol use have all been associated with low melatonin levels..

More about the dosing of melatonin

What we have learned about using hormones is that the lowest effective dose is appropriate and that larger doses do not always infer more benefit. This is the paradox of dosing hormones.

Too much melatonin has been documented to produce side effects such as amnesia or feeling “hungover” the next day and some doctors believe that high doses long term can negatively impact the body’s own production.



Since the body produces between 0.3mg and 0.8 mg of melatonin daily, doses in this range are known as physiologic doses (sometimes referred to as natural doses). Amounts above this range are known as pharmacologic doses (sometimes referred to as drug doses). Much has been written about melatonin’s therapeutic value, but the dose used in the studies appears to be chosen haphazardly or based on previous studies that did not have an explicit purpose for choosing the amount. Therefore, some dogma about dosing melatonin has developed in both the scientific research community and in clinical medicine.

Researchers from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in 2001 compared physiologic doses to pharmacologic doses and very low (below physiologic) doses and found the best objective data at the 0.3mg doses of melatonin. This same group evaluated the 0.3mg dose in children with beneficial results.

Dr. Paolo Lissoni’s cancer research demonstrated that 20mg was effective in arresting tumor growth and improving quality of life markers. Studies since have all mirrored this dose; however, it is important to note that 20 mg was a calculated dose. Little research to date has been conducted on lower dosages to determine if lower doses are as effective in cancer patients or if the physiological dose of 0.3mg can be used for prevention. Hopefully, future studies will delve into these questions.

In 2002 researcher Alfred J. Lewy and colleagues found that physiologic doses (0.5mg) may offer benefits that pharmacologic doses (20mg) do not. This supports the concept that too much melatonin may not be good for a person. It also begs the question, “How much is too much?” It will be difficult to answer this for the masses as hormone production and timing of secretion has so many variables even among populations.

Melatonin is quickly broken down by the body and should be dosed daily at the appropriate level. Therefore, the dosing of melatonin is a very personalized question for each patient. Because of this fast metabolism, melatonin must be used daily and not every second or third day to accommodate a lower daily dosage from a larger dose capsule. For example, if a person feels best on 1mg of melatonin, 3mg of melatonin every third day is not appropriate. Off-the-shelf products containing 3-5mg are often chosen because they are seen as a good value, but getting more medicine for your dollar is not always a better value if the dose is incorrect.

For this reason, starting at the physiological dose of 0.3mg and increasing if necessary is often recommended except for specific conditions where higher doses are needed short term such as jet lag, shift work or cancer. Melatonin should be taken 30-60 minutes prior to bed on an empty stomach. Some authorities suggest limiting melatonin to 0.3mg in children. Melatonin should not be combined with certain medications such as blood pressure medications like methoxamine (Vasoxyl) and clonidine (Catapres), blood-thinning medications such as warfarin (Coumadin), MAO inhibitor drugs, steroids and immunosuppressant medication. Additionally, people who are pregnant or nursing should not take melatonin and people with autoimmune conditions, diabetes, thyroid conditions, epilepsy, leukemia, lymphoproliferative disorders, or major depressive mood disorders should only take under medical supervision or approval.

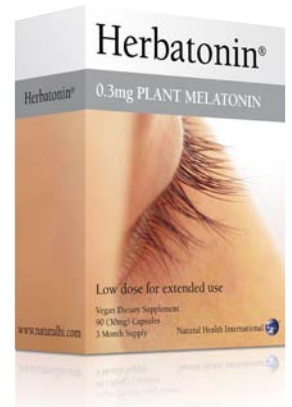


Herbatonin 3mg is for jet lag, shift work or specific medical conditions. It is used short term to align a circadian rhythm containing. It contains 60 capsules which is a two month supply for \$23.99.

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Herbatonin 0.3mg is for long term use as a brain antioxidant, sleep support and as a physiological dose for people with low levels of melatonin due to age, environment or other factors. It contains 90 capsules which is a three month supply for only \$13.99.

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Step away from the Diet Soda.... You're getting fat!

The truth about Diet Soda and weight loss

Did you know the tongue recognizes "sweet" flavors as sugars & signals the body to start producing insulin to regulate blood sugar. Research is showing diet sodas are worse as there is sweet flavor but no actual sugar, so our bodies now crave sugar as our blood sugar levels become unstable, thus why some people drink in upwards of 12 cans/day trying to satiate sugar cravings.

Below is an article by Kimberley Stakal from www.organicauthority.com



The Wall Street Journal just reported that Diet Coke beats out Pepsi for consumers in the US—only Coke beats them both in total sales. Consumers reach for a can of that cold, bubbly, sweet beverage to get their jolted caffeine fix and a sugary high, but without the calories of normal soda. Sad thing is, if you're drinking diet soda, it's still going to make you fat. Find out why.

Researchers from the University of Texas Health Science Center recently presented strong data proving that diet soda makes us fat. They found that the more diet sodas a person drank, the more weight they gained. It doesn't get much simpler than that.

But it does get more serious than that. Overall, all soda drinkers (both sugar-sweetened and diet) gained weight compared to a control group that did not drink soda. But those drinking only diet soda gained more weight than those drinking regular soda. Hm. So much, in fact, that researchers concluded there is "a 41% increase in risk of being overweight for every can or bottle of diet soft drink a person consumes each day."

Why does diet soda make us fat? It's not unlike low-fat foods, which also make us fat. Here are some popular theories:

People allow themselves to binge on other foods thinking they can "balance it out" by drinking diet soda later. Wrong, silly. You're not balancing anything out. You're just bingeing. Try drinking water and eating less instead.

Putting any food or drink into our stomachs (that isn't water) triggers our gastric juices to get flowing for digestion, which makes us feel hungry. It's like revving the engine for digestion. When we tell our bodies to get ready to absorb nutrients from a diet soda that's actually delivering nothing (but a whole lot of chemicals), our brains get the message that we need to eat something to fill this now revved up engine.

The tongue recognizes "sweet" flavors as sugars or carbohydrates, and it signals the body to start producing insulin to help regulate blood sugar levels. Well, when we drink diet soda, there is sweet flavor but no actual sugar going into the system, so our bodies now crave sugar as our blood sugar levels have become unstable. This brings on food cravings and sugar cravings in particular. For this reason, diet soda also causes diabetes and pre-diabetic conditions. Awesome.



The real way to fight fatigue and hunger is to drink more water. We often mistake thirst for hunger, and by downing a full glass of water, you can stave off random cravings. It's also pretty amazing what downing a full glass of water will do for a foggy head—clears it right up with a bit of freshness. Down a full can of diet soda, and you may feel high for about 15 minutes, but chances are you'll feel downer, hungrier and even a bit fatter soon enough.

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Looking for a Healthy Alternative to Salt?

The difference between table, sea and Original Himalayan Crystal Salt

One of the easiest things we can do to improve our health is stop eating salt. That action by itself will usually result in a health improvement. But no one wants to give up the taste of salt or using it in their cooking, so what is the answer? Well more people are starting to look at alternatives such as sea, Kosher or celtic salt, however with polluted oceans, heavy metals and less than ideal mineral ratios we are still seeing increases in blood pressure and other negative health impacts. Fortunately research into another alternative called Original Himalayan Crystal Salt is providing the answer. In fact research has shown that this source has 84 trace minerals, perfect structure for absorption and is resulting in improvements in cellular health, metabolic function and supporting balanced blood pressure. Interestingly a new study published in the May 4, 2011 issue of the Journal of the American Medical Association concluded that subjects who consumed the least amount of salt were the most likely to die of cardiovascular disease. We also know the importance of key trace minerals such as sodium and potassium for cellular health as seen by many sports drinks. However numerous studies have shown us over the last thirty years that highly refined and processed table salt can have damaging effects to human physiology such as increased blood pressure and chronic dehydration. In addition insufficient trace minerals leads to oxidative stress, inflammation and acidemia.

Below is a break down showing you the differences between table, sea and Original Himalayan Crystal Salt and an article on why salt is so important.

Table Salt

Stripped of all of its natural elements through industrial processing, chemically cleaned, bleached and treated with anticaking agents, common table salt now contains just Sodium, Chloride and potential detrimental chemical compounds. Anti-caking agents prevent common salt from absorbing moisture while being stored. However, it performs the same role in the body, inhibiting our body's ability to absorb the salt. The refinement process, which heats common table salt to extremely high temperatures, alters the structure. As you can see from this picture the crystals are isolated from each other and in an unnatural structure. In

order for the body to metabolize these crystals and use the minerals in the salt, it must use tremendous amounts of energy and liquids in the body to break down the structure and absorb the minerals. This results in the body using more resources than it gains from consuming the salt – thus a net loss. Furthermore, many of these minerals can not be absorbed and result in deposits and blockages in the body.

Sea Salt

Alternatively, sea salt contains more minerals than common table salt. However, the mineral content and ratio varies from source to source and are not always ideal for the body's optimal health. As you can see from the image even though the crystalline structure is better than common table salt, it is still not ideal and still results in a net loss in energy and resources for the body. However, the largest concern with sea salt today stems from our ever increasing polluted oceans. From traces of petro chemicals, oil and other heavy metals, such as mercury, the salt from our oceans potentially has many hidden toxins. What's more is that the process used to "clean" sea salt is a high temperature chemical process which merely results in another version of common table salt with a few more minerals.





Original Himalayan Crystal Salt®

Contains 84 trace minerals in almost identical ratios to what exist in our blood. The crystal minerals are in ionic form, meaning they are charged and can be absorbed straight into a cell instead of through the blood stream like we do with normal food. The balanced crystalline structure reveals the fine branching and highly absorbable structure which is easily metabolized by the body and results in a net gain in our body's energy and resources.

Why the right Salt is essential to your health – Comparing Table Salt , Sea Salt and Himalayan Crystal Salt

By *Carlin Saldanha N.D., MPH*

Dr. Saldanha is a naturopathic doctor, nutritionist, herbalist, wholefoods chef, and yoga teacher practicing in the San Francisco Bay Area. Carlin also holds her Masters in Public Health and has dedicated herself to the fields of wellbeing, health education, prenatal healthcare, natural medicine, fertility, and women's health for over 10 years.

John F. Kennedy once said, "All of us have in our veins the exact same percentage of salt in our blood that exists in the ocean and, therefore, we have salt in our blood, in our sweat, in our tears. We are tied to the ocean. And when we go back to the sea... we are going back from whence we came."

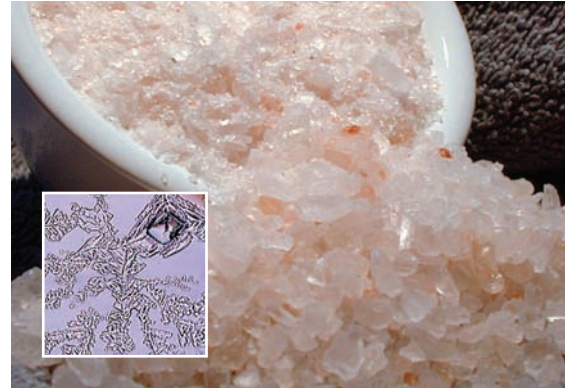
As you know, all life evolved from the ocean and just like the ocean, your blood and every cell in your body contain salt and water. In fact, millions of years ago the ocean's salt water, untouched by humankind and pollution, had an almost identical content and ratio of minerals that exist in your body today. Your body and the ocean's salt water, as it was in the beginning, contain 84 minerals in what is believed to be the ideal ratio for your body's optimal function.

Each mineral in your body performs a variety of important roles, with the synergistic combination of all 84 minerals forming the foundation for true health and wellbeing. However, depleted mineral reserves in soils, non-sustainable farming practices, and pesticides that inhibit the uptake of certain minerals, mean that vegetables, fruit and animal produce are no longer the complete source of minerals that they once were.

Historically, people would add mineral-rich salts to their diet, but the salt that we add to food today is very different from those traditional salts, which contained a plethora of minerals. Instead common table salt contains just two minerals - sodium and chloride. Not only does table salt lack the full mineral profile that your body needs, but the structure, and the various chemicals that are mixed with sodium chloride, are actually detrimental to your health. Table salt is refined at extremely high temperatures, which alters its chemical structure and bio-availability. Furthermore it is chemically cleaned, bleached and treated with anti-caking agents. These anti-caking agents prevent salt from mixing with water and clumping in the jar. However, they have the very same effect in your body, hence won't dissolve easily, which frequently results in a buildup of salt deposits in your organs and tissues. But there's more - the two most common anti-caking agents are sodium aluminosilicate and calcium aluminosilicate, both sources of aluminum, which is a heavy metal associated with Alzheimer's disease and other health issues.

Instead of the mineral-rich salt that supports life, common table salt, a refined and impoverished version of the original, is actually harmful to your health. Its use has been linked to conditions including: high blood pressure, stroke, osteoporosis, arthritis, kidney stones, and stomach ulcers. The body must use a lot of its water reserves to metabolize refined table salt, leading to chronic dehydration on a deep cellular level. What's more the body recognizes refined salt as poison and tries to excrete it as quickly as possible, causing a further burden on your body's detoxification organs, especially the liver and kidneys.

Knowing the vast array of health problems caused by common table salt, millions of people now avoid salt completely or look for healthier alternatives. However, avoiding salt is not the answer. Lack of salt and all the key minerals the body requires can also affect your health adversely. Linus Pauling, PhD, winner of two Nobel prizes said, "All diseases of humanity can be attributed to the lack of minerals in our bodies... You can trace every sickness, every disease, and every ailment, to a mineral deficiency."





Essentially, every cell in the human body is dependent on the presence of sodium and potassium. These two minerals need to be in constant, dynamic balance so the cells can exchange energy. Your body is constantly monitoring these minerals and working to maintain their delicate balance. Minerals are also a vital part of your cells, blood and lymphatic fluids. They are critical for all body functions, including muscular contraction, electrolyte balance, blood sugar regulation and pH balance – but you need all minerals, and in a form which your body can readily use.

Many people have started to use other types of salt such as sea salt or Celtic salt. However, while many sea salts may have more minerals than just sodium and chloride, rarely do they contain the full complement that your body needs. Nor are the structures and mineral ratios of sea salts ideal, with clinical research demonstrating that sea salt, like table salt, increases acidity and blood pressure. More importantly, sea salt harvested from today's polluted oceans has the potential to contain petro-chemicals and unacceptable levels of heavy metals. Furthermore, many sea salts are refined in a similar process to table salt.

But there's good news! Recently re-discovered is one of nature's purest and most complete mineral salt sources on Earth. In the remote reaches of the Himalayan Mountains are the mineral salt crystals which were created 250 million years ago. A legacy of ancient oceans, trapped after tectonic plate movement and subsequent evaporation, Himalayan Crystal Salt contains 84 minerals vital for human health. These minerals include sodium, chloride, potassium, calcium, magnesium, iodine, iron, zinc, manganese and many more. Additionally, these minerals exist in ionic form, which means they can be easily absorbed. In order for your body to benefit from the minerals you take in, they must be extremely small. Their size is measured in angstroms. As a reference point, a sheet of paper is 1,000,000 angstroms thick. Even though minerals with larger molecular size will eventually be absorbed into your blood, the angstrom-sized minerals can be readily absorbed into individual cells and that's where they are most effective.

The best way for you to absorb these minerals is in a liquid form of Himalayan Crystal Salt called Sole. Sole (so-lay) is a super-saturated solution of Himalayan Crystal Salt in purified water - providing the ultimate infusion of ionized minerals in a highly bio-available liquid form. The minerals are now small enough to be able to pass into the cells, being immediately available as electrical potentials, or ENERGY. In German, the word Sole, which is derived from the Latin word "sol", means sun. Sole means fluid sunlight or fluid light energy. More scientifically, this can be explained as better overall availability of electrolytes or charged ions, which conduct energy between cells and improve cellular function. Use of Himalayan Crystal Salt as a condiment or as Sole can lead to electrolyte-balance, balanced blood pressure, improved gastrointestinal function, balanced pH levels and increased energy.

It is important to point out that there are many salts which claim to be the Himalayan Crystal Salt, yet these may actually come from South America, Europe or exhibit a very different mineral profile. The easiest way to feel secure, knowing you have the Himalayan Crystal Salt with the exact mineral combination, the proven research and ultimate health benefits is to ask your supplier to provide you with an analytical profile of their salt which shows all 84 minerals in the proportions indicated in the Water & Salt book; also make sure that the source of the salt is Pakistan and that it bears the official seal of the Royal family to denote its region of origin.

For more information on Original Himalayan Crystal Salt, health conditions, the latest health news, specials and to ask questions join the over 70,000 people and follow our CEO James Frame and Medical Team at:

www.Facebook.com/HimalayanCrystalSalt or www.Twitter.com/HimalayanCS

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