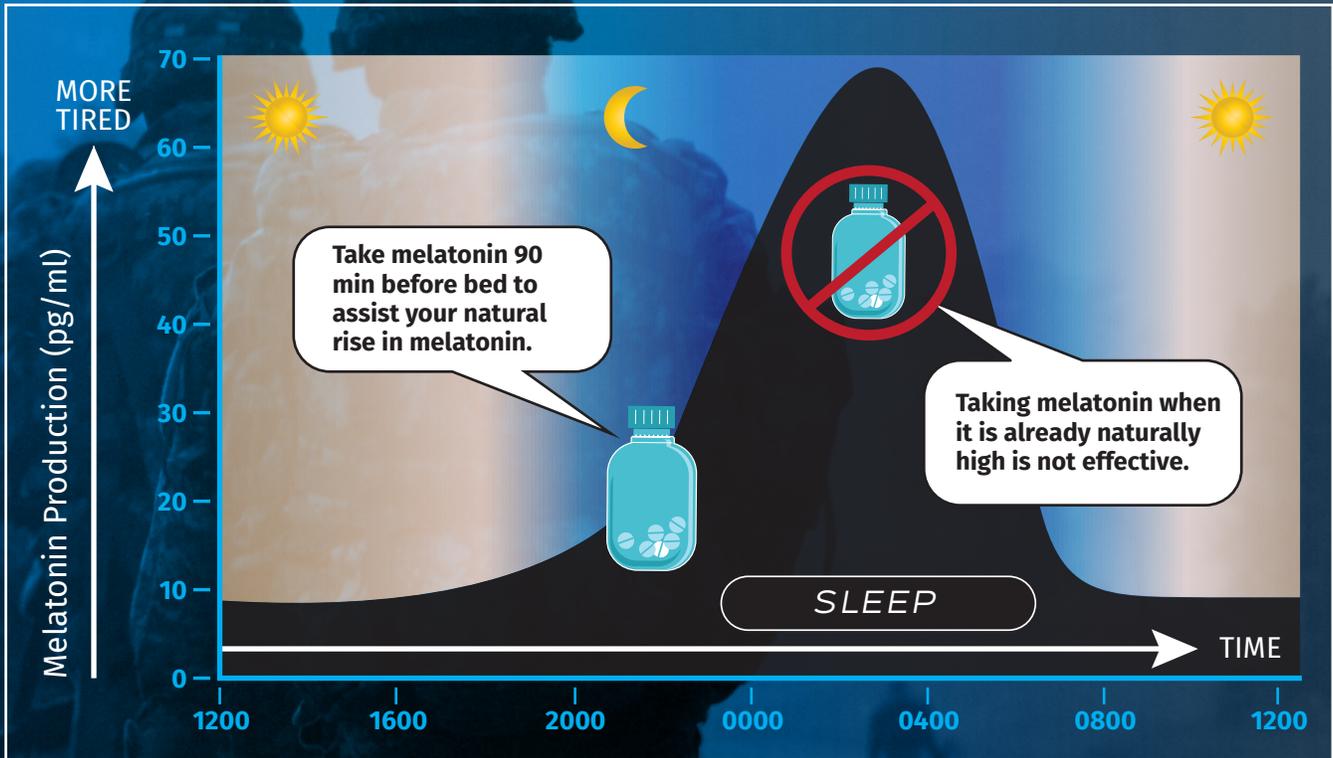


OPERATIONAL MELATONIN SUPPLEMENT USE



FACTS ABOUT YOUR BODY'S NATURAL MELATONIN CYCLE

Melatonin is a hormone your body naturally produces in response to darkness that creates feelings of tiredness.

Melatonin levels are naturally low during "light" hours and high during "dark" hours.

The rise in melatonin helps signal your body that it is almost time for bed. It typically occurs about 2 hours before your normal bedtime.

Light (natural or artificial) suppresses your melatonin production.

WHAT IS A MELATONIN SUPPLEMENT AND WHEN SHOULD I TAKE IT?

Melatonin supplements are a form of melatonin that can produce similar effects as your naturally produced melatonin.

Taking a melatonin supplement when your natural melatonin is already high is not as effective as a sleep aid (for example, if you wake up during the night).

Not all brands of supplements are created equal. Buying brands that are USP verified can help ensure quality of the supplement.

Melatonin supplements have fewer side effects than other sleep medications.

Melatonin supplements should be taken about 90 minutes before your desired bed time.

Supplement dosages can vary, but it is typically between 1-5mg of melatonin.

MELATONIN FOR JETLAG AND SHIFTWORK

MANAGING JETLAG

BEFORE

To reduce jetlag ***before*** traveling eastward across time zones :

Try to incrementally (1 hour per time zone per day) shift your bedtime earlier and use a melatonin supplement to help you fall asleep at that earlier time.

AFTER

To reduce jetlag you already have ***after*** traveling :

Take a melatonin supplement when falling asleep in the new time zone, especially if it is light outside or you are trying to go to bed earlier than you are used to.

*Melatonin is NOT typically recommended for westward travel.

BEING ON SHIFTWORK

PREPARE

To ***prepare*** for shift work (e.g., a night shift, when you need to shift your bedtime earlier or initiating sleep when it is light out) :

Use a melatonin supplement to help you fall asleep.

DURING

During shift work when you need to initiate sleep when it is light out :

Take a melatonin supplement 90 minutes before your desired bedtime to help you fall asleep.

COMMON QUESTIONS

WHAT IF I'M A NIGHT OWL?



If you are someone who naturally goes to bed late and you need to go to bed earlier and wake up earlier, take a melatonin supplement 90 minutes before your desired bedtime to help you fall asleep.

WILL A MELATONIN SUPPLEMENT HELP WITH MY SLEEP PROBLEMS?

If you are having trouble staying asleep, melatonin may NOT be the most effective tool because melatonin is already naturally high during the night when it is dark.

Melatonin supplements are best used to help you fall asleep when natural melatonin levels are lower (e.g., during the day or in the evening when natural levels are low), but NOT if you have trouble staying asleep.

The opinions or assertions contained herein are the private views of the authors and are not to be construed as official.

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For more sleep resources, check out our website: <https://www.wrair.army.mil/node/349>

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