

Herbs work?



Can Valerian really promote sleep?

In the last year alone, two scientific journal articles reinforced the findings of a landmark 1982 clinical study of 128 subjects which found that valerian produced "significant improvement in sleep quality" without the hang-over effects commonly experienced from synthetic sleeping pills.¹ More recent research has concluded that "valerian can be a supplement for improving insomnia"² and that valerian extract can be "recommended for the treatment of patients with mild psychophysiological insomnia."³

Surprised?

What's not surprising is that modern scientific evaluations are validating observations made centuries ago about valerian root. Reports of its use as a sedative date back to at least the 2nd century AD.⁴ In 1756, one authority described valerian as, "...excellent against nervous complaints."⁵ A century later, similar observations were made about valerian's use "to quiet nervous excitement" and "to promote sleep."⁶



Take herbs responsibly.

When taken correctly, herbs can play a significant part in maintaining your health and well-being. Knowledge of the potential effects of an herb, though, is essential for responsible use. For instance, it is generally recommended that valerian not be used immediately prior to driving a car or operating equipment.⁴ Before taking any herbal supplement, be sure to read all of the label information related to its use. Never take more than the recommended serving. If you are using prescription medications, consult with a qualified healthcare practitioner.

¹Leathwood, PD, et al: Aqueous extract of valerian root (*Valeriana officinalis* L) improves sleep quality in man. *Pharmacol Biochem Behav.* 17(1):65-71. 1982. ²Dominguez, RA et al. Valerian as a hypnotic for Hispanic patients. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology.* 6(1):84-92. 2000. ³Donath, F, et al.: Critical evaluation of the effect of valerian extract on sleep structure and sleep quality. *Pharmacopsychiatry.* 33(2):47-53. 2000. ⁴Upton, R. *American Herbal Pharmacopoeia and Therapeutic Compendium: Valerian Root.* 1999. ⁵Hill, John. *The British Herbal.* 1756. ⁶Edes, Robert T. *Therapeutic Handbook of the United States Pharmacopoeia.* 1883.

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