



The MIND HEALTH REPORT

Secrets to Unlocking Your Mind for Work, Love and Life

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Sleep Deprivation: Are You a Victim?

Sleep is one of the basic necessities of life. For humans, sleep fulfills a number of biological functions, such as aiding in the rejuvenation and growth of the immune, nervous, skeletal, and muscular systems. Sleep also has been shown to play an important role in memory processing and preservation.

And yet, with today's hectic, fast-paced lifestyles, sleep often is seriously undervalued and misunderstood. In fact, many of us are so accustomed to going through the day without being fully alert that living in a state of chronic sleep deprivation has come to seem practically normal.

Only 33 in 100 American adults believe they get enough sleep on a daily basis, according to a survey of more than 400,000 people conducted by state governments in collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The survey also found that 41 percent of adults believe they sleep enough less than half the time; only 17 percent reported sleeping enough more than half the time; and 11 percent said they routinely lack sleep.

Yet as dramatic as these figures are, they may actually underestimate the problem to a significant degree.

"Asking people if they're sleep-deprived is the least accurate method you can use, because when you are sleep-deprived, you don't even realize it," says James B. Maas, Ph.D., who is the Stephen H. Weiss presidential fellow at Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y. Maas, a psychology professor, is also a member of the graduate fields

Dr. Daniel G. Amen: Rewire Your Brain

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of communications and education.

"Most people sleep almost an hour less than they think they do," says Maas, who is co-author of *Sleep for Success! Everything You Must Know About Sleep But Are Too Tired to Ask* as well as other books on the subject.

Maas has studied sleep for more than 45 years, and is particularly well known for coining the term "power nap." He frequently gives lectures to educational, business, medical, and professional sports organizations.

The Mind Health Report asked Maas to fill us in about how much sleep people really need, what happens when we have a shortfall, and what steps

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can be taken to get sufficient rest on a regular basis.

Sleep Is Not a Luxury

“So many people say to me, ‘I’m a great sleeper; I’m asleep the minute my head hits the pillow,’” Maas says. But ironically, “that is a sure sign of serious sleep deprivation” because a well-rested person will take between 15 and 20 minutes to fall asleep.

And just how much sleep do we really need? It varies from one person to another, but as a general rule you should sleep between seven and nine hours a night, which is more than many people get. The National Sleep Foundation has found that one in five Americans sleeps less than six hours a night, and only about 28 percent sleep eight hours or more.

Culturally, we tend to have a misguided perception that people who sleep more are lazy and likely to be overweight. But, in fact, the opposite is true, because lack of sleep disrupts hormones that regulate appetite and can trigger overeating.

For example, people who get less than four hours of sleep a night are 73 percent more likely to be obese than those who get seven to nine hours. But even a much smaller sleep shortfall can contribute to weight gain, high blood pressure,

heart disease, and diabetes, as well as interfering with mental function and mood, contributing to dementia, and shortening lifespan.

Still, only 40 percent of Americans agree that sleep is as important as diet and exercise, despite the fact that inadequate rest makes it virtually impossible to maintain a healthy diet and have the physical and mental capacity to stick with an exercise program.

“Most people treat sleep as a luxury. But it is definitely a necessity,” Maas says.

Recently, a small amount of research suggesting that too much sleep is actually unhealthy has introduced confusion. But in those cases, says Maas, it’s most likely that the people involved in the studies were suffering from

underlying medical conditions that affected their health adversely — rather than having an adverse reaction to sleep.

The Power of Sleep

Although fatigue and drowsiness are the obvious signs of sleep deprivation, feeling tired is just the tip of the iceberg, Maas says. Among other things, lack of sleep slows down reaction time and considerably interferes with your ability to think clearly.

“The term ‘sleep deprivation’ means that you have a deficiency that could lead to risky consequences,” he says.

Are You Sleep-Deprived?

To find out whether lack of sleep is interfering with your daily life, ask yourself:

1. Does a warm room, a boring meeting or lecture, or one alcoholic drink make you drowsy?
2. When your head hits the pillow, do you fall asleep within five minutes?
3. Do you need an alarm clock to get up?
4. Do you hit the snooze button repeatedly?
5. Do you sleep more on the weekend than on weekdays?

If you answered yes to one or more of these questions, you probably are sleep deprived.

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How Much Sleep Do You Need, and How Do You Get It?

To determine your Personal Sleep Quotient — the exact amount of sleep that’s right for you — James B. Maas recommends these steps:

- Pick a time when you’re likely to fall asleep and schedule your time to get eight hours of sleep. Follow this schedule for a week to allow your body to adjust.
- If you need an alarm to wake up, or feel tired during the day, go to bed 15 to 30 minutes earlier each night during the following week. Keep increasing your sleep time until you can wake up without an alarm and feel alert all day.
- Once you determine your ideal bedtime, cut 15 minutes off your sleep time. If you don’t feel rested, add those 15 minutes back. That’s your

ideal sleep time, or Personal Sleep Quotient. Stick with that sleep schedule.

Reality Check. If you want to know exactly how long and how well you’re really sleeping, visit a sleep center and get tested in a sleep lab. At home, you can wear a headband with a wireless connection to a sleep measuring gadget that looks like a bedside alarm clock. Data on your sleep patterns can be downloaded to your computer and used to improve your sleep. For details, visit www.myzeo.com.

The Secret to a Good Nap. Naps aren’t an alternative to a good night’s sleep, but they beat being sleep-deprived. Napping for 15 to 20 minutes — or for 90 minutes — will leave you refreshed. Anything in between is likely to make you groggy.

Researchers at the University of California, San Diego, asked people to solve math problems with and without adequate sleep, and the difference was startling. A person who could solve math problems easily after eight hours of sleep could not come up with the correct answers after only six hours.

Brain scans show that, with adequate rest, the centers of the brain involved with math fire “like mad” when asked to solve problems. Therefore, an individual is able to come up with correct answers. By contrast, after insufficient sleep, Maas says, “Nothing is going on in the brain. [That’s why] the same person is getting wrong answers.”

For those who doubt the power of sleep, Maas says he knows of no more compelling evidence than those brain scans that show all those neurons firing on adequate sleep vs. few or none when study subjects were sleep-deprived.

The Risks of Sleep Deprivation

The brain simply doesn’t function normally without enough rest. Much like a physical disability forces other parts of the body to work harder to compensate, lack of sleep alters the way the brain functions.

That, in turn, alters the way an individual behaves, reducing control of emotions and

increasing anxiety, aggression, rage, and stress.

Lack of sleep also causes loss of creativity and an inability to process information, concentrate on specific tasks, solve problems, and remember information clearly. Memory retention in sleep-deprived individuals is reduced by 19 percent.

It can lead to mood swings, irritability, and depression — and wreak havoc on relationships with spouses or significant others, children, and co-workers.

In fact, the effects of sleep deprivation can

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James B. Maas



James B. Maas, Ph.D., is a professor of psychology, education, and communication and past chairman of the Psychology Department at Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y. He conducts research on sleep and performance, leadership, and critical thinking, and is a speaker for corporate, medical, nonprofit, and educational organizations. His books include *Power Sleep: The Revolutionary Program That Prepares Your Mind for Peak Performance* and *Sleep for Success! Everything You Must Know About Sleep But Are Too Tired to Ask*. For information, visit www.sleepforsuccess.info.



By Dr. Daniel G. Amen

Five Steps to Rewire Your Brain

Would you like to lose weight but can't seem to stick with a healthy eating program? Do you wish you could stop yelling at your spouse all the time? Have you been trying to quit smoking for years? Why is it so hard to change bad behaviors?

Any change is challenging, which is why most people tend to get stuck in habits. Our brains resist change because they can cruise on autopilot without much effort when we do the "same old things." The brain simply gets comfortable with daily routines — even if they are unhealthy routines.

To change our habits, the brain has to be "rewired" with a whole new system. But it fights that process. However, change doesn't have to be as hard as it seems. Here are five steps to help you rewire your brain so you can kick those bad habits.

Know your motivation. To make lasting progress, you have to know what's driving you to be healthy. Ask yourself: What do you want to do?

- Prevent disease?
- Live longer?
- Be a role model for your children?
- Decrease your risk for Alzheimer's disease?

What is your specific motivation to change? Write it down and put it where you can see it every day. If your motivation involves the loved ones in your life, put their pictures where you can see them.

Understand your pain. For many people, it takes something drastic, such as a heart attack or the threat of divorce, to inspire real change. Typically, you finally make the decision to change only when your bad habits cause too much pain in your life.

You need to understand why you are uncomfortable. Only then can you make the decision to change your brain and break free from unhealthy behavior. Think about how your bad habits have caused you pain. And again, write it down on a piece of paper.

You've gotta have hope. Hope is what makes you believe that you can change — and that your life will be better if you succeed in giving up your bad habits. Without it, you'll never take the first step or be able

to follow a program long enough to create lasting change.

What are the things that fill you with hope? Create a list of people, books, songs, or anything else that makes you feel hopeful about your ability to change your ways.

Find your passion. One of the keys to staying motivated is finding something to be passionate about, something that will keep you feeling energized and excited. You need to fall in love with something other than the bad habits that are making unhappy and unhealthy. For me, falling in love with my brain was a critical step.

Get in touch with your spiritual side. I am not necessarily talking about organized religion, although that can be very helpful for some people. Think of spirituality in the broader sense of feeling connected to something greater than yourself — a higher power, the earth, past or future generations, or your community. Having a sense of belonging is an important step in the journey to change your ways.

Many people believe their bad habits affect no one but themselves. Wrong! Your behavior impacts your family, your friends, your community, and even your co-workers.

Feeling connected, rather than alone and isolated, instills a sense of accountability. Your actions matter when you feel accountable to a higher power, to your society, to your family, or to the others in your group — and it becomes important to kick your bad habits not only for your own good but also for theirs.

‘To change our habits, the brain has to be rewired, but it fights that process.’

Daniel G. Amen, M.D., is a psychiatrist, brain-imaging specialist, and the CEO and medical director of Amen Clinics, Inc. (ACI) in Newport Beach and Fairfield, Calif.; Tacoma, Wash.; and Reston, Va. ACI has the world's largest database of functional brain scans related to psychiatric medicine and the clinics have seen patients from 75 countries. Dr. Amen is an assistant clinical professor of psychiatry and human behavior at the University of California, Irvine School of Medicine. He is the author of 22 books and wrote and produced two PBS specials.

Consumer Alert: Diet Pills Can Be Deadly

Plus, the Natural Solutions That Are Safer and More Effective



Every year, tens of millions of Americans make a New Year's resolution to lose weight. And it's not just about looking good. Being overweight is linked to significant health risks, including heart disease, diabetes and cancer. In fact, one study showed that being overweight can shave up to 10 years off your life. Yet, maintaining a healthy weight is difficult.

Why Is It So Hard to Lose Weight?

If you've ever tried to do it, you know that losing weight can be an uphill battle. This is especially true if you're over 50, as the effects of aging conspire to make weight loss very challenging. It's no wonder that some will try anything to get their weight under control.

Warning: Stay Away from Diet Drugs!

For years, Big Pharma has been trying to develop a blockbuster weight loss drug, but their efforts have been a disaster. The infamous drug Fen-Phen was linked to countless deaths before being taken off the market. Recently, the drug Meridia was banned because it was linked to heart problems. The over-the-counter drug Alli is considered ineffective, and it too has many side effects. Why are weight loss drugs so ineffective? According to experts, your body has several complex systems that maintain weight for survival purposes, and weight loss drugs can make these systems go haywire.

The Dangerous Side Effects of Diet Drugs

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Digestive problems | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High blood pressure |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Liver damage | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nutrient deficiencies |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Depression | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Serious injury or death |

Is There a Natural Alternative That Works?

Exciting new research shows that natural supplements can be extremely effective for weight loss, as they correct the underlying imbalances that cause weight gain in the first place. In fact, natural weight loss aids have been clinically proven to be more effective than pharmaceuticals — not to mention safer.

The 4 Keys to Natural Weight Loss Success

There are typically multiple causes underlying a weight problem, and to achieve success, you need to address them all at the same time. According to weight loss expert Dr. Harry Preuss, of Georgetown University, a synergistic combination of natural ingredients with different mechanisms is necessary for lasting results. In fact, researchers have singled out 4 of the most effective ingredients that support safe, efficient, lasting weight loss when combined in the correct synergy.

The 4 most effective ingredients have been shown to:

- BLOCK CARBS:** Phaseolamine, a white bean extract, blocks absorption of calories from starchy foods. It can help double your weight loss!
- CURB APPETITE:** HCA, which is derived from the tamarind fruit, acts as a powerful appetite suppressant that can put an end to cravings and overeating.
- INCREASE CALORIE BURN:** EGCG, a component of green tea, boosts metabolism and calorie expenditure. It also helps keep the weight off long-term!
- REDUCE FAT:** Chromium regulates insulin, which improves fat burning without decreasing muscle mass. This is considered the healthiest way to lose weight.

Helping Thousands Achieve Their Goals Naturally

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be dramatic enough to mask an individual's true personality. Deprived of sleep, a vibrant, ambitious person might feel and act like a loner, a slow learner, or someone who completely lacks motivation.

Physically, sleep loss increases risks for hypertension, heart attack, stroke, Type 2 diabetes, periodontal disease, obesity, skin problems, and cancer. And driving while sleep-deprived can be as risky as driving drunk.

Steps to Sleep Success

So how can you go about avoiding or reversing sleep deprivation? Maas recommends the following steps:

- Get one period of continuous sleep during the night, rather than napping during the daytime.
- Follow the same sleep schedule every day, including on the weekend.
- Make up for lost sleep as soon as possible, and understand that it may take several nights to pay back your sleep debt.
- Exercise between 5 and 7 p.m., rather than early in morning, for deeper, more restorative sleep. Avoid strenuous exercise less than three hours before bedtime.
- Take advantage of life's opportunities. Good sleepers actively pursue work, social activities, and hobbies, and remain mentally active. Boredom actually induces poor sleep.
- In the evening, follow a pre-sleep routine that reduces stress and calms you down, such as gentle, relaxing exercise, breathing exercises, reading for pleasure (not work), taking a hot bath or shower, or just doing something you enjoy.
- If you're hungry before bed, have a light snack of a carbohydrate- and fiber-rich food, such as a banana, an apple, hummus with vegetables, or dried fruit and nuts, or drink a glass of warm milk. A heavy meal less than three hours before bedtime will keep you up.
- Keep electronic gadgets and work-related material out of the bedroom.
- Keep your bedroom cool (around 65 degrees)

‘Sleep loss increases risks for hypertension, heart attack stroke, obesity, and cancer.’

and dimly lit with 45- to 60-watt tungsten bulbs, rather than fluorescent lighting.

- Use blinds or drapes to make the bedroom as dark as possible when lights are out, or wear a sleep mask.
- If you need a night light in the hallway, bathroom, or a child's bedroom, use a red one. Red is the only color of light that does not signal your brain to wake up.
 - Mask disruptive noise with a sound machine.
 - Keep bedroom decor simple, with muted colors.
 - Sleep in loose-fitting garments or none at all.
 - Replace your mattress before its 10th birthday
 - Test your pillow: Fold it in half. If it doesn't unfold and return to its original shape, get a new one.
- Keep pets and children out of your bed.
- Don't consume caffeine after 2 p.m., and limit your daily intake to 300 mg — that's about three cups of coffee, cola, or energy drinks.
- Avoid alcohol for three hours before bedtime, as it can interrupt restful sleep every 90 minutes.
- Don't use tobacco. Nicotine is a stronger stimulant than caffeine. Smokers can be awakened by nicotine cravings at night.

If you take all the steps necessary for proper sleep for three weeks and the situation doesn't improve, seek help from an accredited sleep center.

But most important of all, Maas recommends simply budgeting enough time in your schedule to allow for adequate sleep. You'll be happy you did.

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Mind Health Insights

Focusing on New Year's Resolutions

“Get fit” and “lose weight” are among the most popular resolutions people make at the start of each year. But it's difficult to achieve such goals without the right approach — and many people fail.

Merely thinking of reasons why you need to exercise — such as the desire to feel better or look better — isn't likely to get you moving, according to a study of 61 inactive college students published in the *Journal of Applied Biobehavioral Research*.

By contrast, concentrating on practical ways to be more active does, in fact, result in getting more exercise.

This doesn't mean you shouldn't set a fitness goal. However, you're more likely to achieve that goal by thinking of specific actions you can take, such as walking with a friend, attending an exercise or dance class, or joining a gym and learning to use weights.

Food labels are a simple yet powerful tool in the quest to lose weight, according to a study of more than 12,000 middle-aged men and women published in *The Journal of Consumer Affairs*.

Researchers found that those who routinely read food labels, especially before buying a packaged food for the first time, are more likely to lose weight than people who exercise but ignore food labels.

The combination of getting regular exercise and reading food labels produces the best results.

Avoid Caregiver Burnout

Taking care of an elderly parent can be very stressful and can even

shorten the caregiver's life. To avoid “burnout,” excessive stress, and ill health, geriatric care manager Kathy Johnson recommends that caregivers:

- Attend a support group for feedback and to learn coping strategies
- As much as possible, rotate caregiving responsibilities with other family members
- Exercise daily and maintain a healthy diet
- Aim to have some “quiet time” each day
- Stay involved in hobbies

Johnson, the founder and CEO of Home Care Assistance, which provides in-home care for seniors, offers more tips in her book, *Happy to 102: The Best Kept Secrets to a Long and Happy Life*, as well as at www.homecareassistance.com.

The Best Natural Remedies for Anxiety

A review of 24 clinical trials involving more than 2,000 people has identified four natural substances as effective remedies for anxiety: passion flower, kava, and a combination of two amino acids: l-lysine and l-arginine. None produced significant side effects.

The greatest number of studies supported kava, a plant root that is ground to consume as an herbal drink. It was shown to be safe in daily amounts up to 400 mg (higher dosages were not tested in the studies under review). In addition to anxiety, kava helps relieve restlessness and insomnia without causing mental impairment.

Researchers found that passion flower, which has a long history as a remedy for anxiety, restlessness,

and nervousness, performed as well as a benzodiazepine — a commonly used prescription tranquilizer — though the herb did not act as quickly as the drug. The herb was also useful to relieve anxiety before surgery.

A combination of l-arginine and l-lysine was shown to influence neurotransmitters involved in stress and anxiety, and may also help balance the stress hormone cortisol.

Scientists at the Global Neuroscience Initiative Foundation, a nonprofit organization based in Los Angeles, carried out the study, which was published in *Nutrition Journal*.

Working for the Greater Good

Employees who believe they are working for the greater good, above and beyond a paycheck, are more productive and happier, according to a research project at the University of Notre Dame's Mendoza College of Business.

The study, called “Business for the Greater Good,” is still under way, but results so far suggest that productivity can increase by as much as 40 percent when employees believe that a company is doing more than simply making a profit.

For example, among workers at methane-powered farms that are contributing to a better environment by reducing toxic emissions, job satisfaction is higher, and the work force is more stable than on conventional farms. Environmentally friendly farms significantly reduce or eliminate electricity costs. However, increased productivity of workers may bring even greater rewards for these businesses in the long run.

How to Beat Sleep Robbers

Computer and television screens, mid-afternoon drinks with caffeine, stress, and anything that gets your adrenaline pumping before bedtime are all contributors to sleep problems. Here are some simple solutions to alleviate common sleep obstacles.

■ **Computers and Television.** Electronic screens, including iPads and tablet PCs, emit a lot of blue-spectrum light, which your body reads as a signal that it's time to be awake. Ideally, it's best to avoid this type of light for three hours before bed, but one hour before sleep is the most critical time.

If you must watch TV or use a computer late into the night, you can wear special glasses that cut out the blue light spectrum. Available from The Litebook Co., the glasses can be worn alone or over prescription eyewear. Costs for the Litebook glasses range from about \$40 to \$50 a pair.

■ Late-Night Entertainment Pitfalls.

Even if you cut out blue daylight with special glasses, late-night news with violent content, or any programming that gets your adrenaline pumping, will make it more difficult to fall asleep and stay asleep, as will playing challenging games on your computer. Choose programs or websites that calm you down during the hour before you go to bed.

■ **Mid-Afternoon Pick-Me-Ups.** Coffee and other caffeinated drinks can help tide many people over a mid-afternoon slump, but they are also elusive sleep robbers. What most people don't know is that caffeine stays in your system for eight to 10 hours, so if you consume it after 2 p.m., your body still could be under its influence when you

go to bed. Caffeine makes it more difficult to fall asleep, and can cause you to wake up more than once during the night.

Decaffeinated drinks also can interrupt sleep because they still contain some caffeine. Look for "caffeine-free" drinks rather than decaffeinated ones, or choose beverages that are naturally devoid of caffeine, such as herbal teas (instead of green tea, which does contain caffeine).

■ **Light Therapy.** Exposure to a daylight spectrum (not the same as ordinary indoor lighting) does a better job than caffeine in relieving a slump in energy, alertness, and mood during the afternoon. In place of coffee, an energy drink, or soda, use a portable light by Litebook, which has been tested in clinical trials.

A Litebook is small (1-by-5-by-5 inches), weighs just 11 ounces, and comes with a

rechargeable battery. These devices cost about \$200 — equivalent to about one \$3 cup of coffee each work day for three months, with zero calories. Use it for about 20 minutes in the afternoon for best results. A 20-minute walk outdoors, in daylight, will do the same job.

■ **Winding Down and Reducing Stress.** Even if your day is stressful, it's easier to get a good night's rest if you wind down gradually.

Listening to classical music or doing something relaxing — such as talking with friends or sending a nice e-mail, doing a few gentle yoga poses, or reading a book — can help you get more restful sleep.

Even if you're not particularly stressed, don't expect to work late on a challenging project and then fall asleep immediately. If that does happen, it's a sign that you're probably sleep-deprived.

Curable Dementia

"Many people who show early signs of dementia are actually sleep deprived," says James Maas. This often happens among older people who start taking medications that interfere with sleep. Common culprits include some prescription drugs for rheumatoid arthritis, high blood pressure, Type 2 diabetes, and high cholesterol. Daytime grogginess from sleeping pills can also be interpreted as a sign of aging.

If you suspect that lack of sleep could be causing a loved one to manifest dementia symptoms, get medications checked by a physician who is board certified in sleep medicine (to find one, check www.sleepcenters.org), and encourage the person to get sufficient sleep.

Ask the Doctors

The Mind Health Report editors seek out top doctors across the nation to provide answers to your mind health concerns. Please include your full name, city, and state when submitting. If you have a question, please e-mail it to: mindreport@newsmax.com.

My 15-year-old daughter is always tired on school days because she has to get up at 6 a.m. She's struggling to maintain her good grades. Do you have any suggestions?

— Jade, Seattle, Wash.

Dr. Whitney responds: Teens need between eight and nine hours of sleep each night. Two main factors, biological and cultural, can cause problems.



Biologically, when children reach puberty, a shift in their internal clock prompts them to stay up longer and get up later. Culturally, late evening tends to be prime social time, when teens visit social networks and text or talk on the phone with their friends.

To fix this, you have to set a schedule that will allow for better sleeping habits. Set limits on computer and phone time. If your daughter likes to study late, that's another habit to change.

Despite biology, most teens can get enough rest by changing their behavior. In addition to simply going to bed earlier, there are some key things that will help your daughter fall asleep. Most importantly, avoid caffeine after 2 p.m., including many energy and sports drinks, sodas, coffee, tea, and chocolate.

Earlier in the day, they should consume no more than one or two cups or cans of any caffeinated drink, and go to bed at the same time every night, including on weekends.

Courtney Whitney, D.O., is board certified in internal medicine and sleep medicine. Whitney is the president and owner of the Whitney Sleep Center in Plymouth and Apple Valley, Minn., which has accreditation from the American Academy of Sleep Medicine.

My husband has been diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. Are there any nutrients that can help?

— Deanne, Clackamas, Ore.

Dr. Kompoliti responds: Researchers are studying the effect of CoQ10 (coenzyme Q10) on Parkinson's disease. CoQ10 is produced naturally in the body and is an important link in the chain of chemical reactions that produce energy in mitochondria, the "powerhouses" of cells. The enzyme is also a potent antioxidant: a chemical that "mops up" potentially harmful chemicals generated during normal metabolism.



Several studies have shown that Parkinson's patients have impaired mitochondrial function. Additionally, laboratory research has demonstrated that CoQ10 can protect the area of the brain Parkinson's damages.

In a previous small study of people with early stage Parkinson's, 1,200 mg of CoQ10, combined with vitamin E (d-alpha tocopherol acetate), showed promising but not conclusive results for slowed progression of the disease during a 16-month period.

A current study of 600 subjects is the largest to date and is testing 1,200 mg and 2,400 mg doses of CoQ10 combined with vitamin E in chewable tablets, for a period of 18 months.

We know that 1,200 mg of CoQ10 daily is a safe amount, and may slow progression of Parkinson's, though there may be no evident improvement in symptoms. Vitamin C, another antioxidant (usually 500 mg daily) also could help, theoretically — but there is no concrete evidence that it is effective.

Katie Kompoliti, M.D., is board certified in neurology and associate professor of Neurological Sciences at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago. Dr. Kompoliti is a specialist in movement disorders, including Parkinson's disease. The CoQ10 product being used in the studies referenced is Vitaline, with a 2:1 ratio of CoQ10 to vitamin E (e.g., 1,200 mg CoQ10 with 600 IU vitamin E).

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