**How a Healthy Sleep Can Help You to Overcome Winter Blues**

Scientists and the medical community have found a definitive link between sleep and depression. During the winter months when depression is prevalent, it’s even more important to get quality sleep. If you’re struggling with the winter blues, simply modifying your sleeping habits can make a world of difference.

**The Sleep and Depression Link**

There’s actually a cyclical link between sleep and depression. Depression itself causes poor sleep. And poor sleep causes depression. It can be a vicious circle. The link is actually hormonal.

When you sleep your body produces hormones that improve your physical and mental health. When you don’t get enough of these hormones, the imbalance can cause symptoms of depression.

Additionally, depression can have an adverse effect on your body’s ability to produce these hormones, thus making it very difficult to sleep. The hormones in question are serotonin and melatonin.

**Getting Better Sleep**

If your depression is severe, consider seeking help from your doctor. Your physician can prescribe a sleep aid to get the ball rolling. However, it’s important to use the sleep aid to set the stage for quality sleep.

You don’t want to become dependent on it. Use the sleep aid to create good sleep habits. Once you’ve had a few nights of good sleep you can continue with the habits and eliminate the medication.

**Good sleep habits include:**

* Do not eat or drink before bed.
* Do not watch television in your bedroom.
* Do not engage with electronic devices in your bedroom before sleep – put the Blackberry away.
* Meditate or journal before sleep. Engage in calming activities.
* Do not exercise before bed.
* Create a routine. For example, brush your teeth and wash your face. Get into your pajamas and then journal for five to ten minutes. Close the journal. Turn off the lights and go to sleep.
* Try not to worry about sleep. The more you worry, the more difficult it will be to fall asleep.
* Do not drink alcohol before you go to bed. In fact, try to eliminate alcoholic beverages from your day until your depression issue is under control.
* Keep your bedroom dedicated to sleep. Don’t have your home office, exercise equipment, children or pets in your room. Your sleep is too important.
* Also surround yourself with comfort. Find a good pillow. Buy sheets and blankets that make you feel good.
* Avoid stimulants in the afternoon and evenings. Don’t eat chocolate or drink caffeine.
* Finally, go to sleep and wake up at the same time each day. You’re training your body to sleep.

Good sleep may take some time. However, when you embrace good sleeping habits you can achieve mental health and wellbeing.

Take care of your body - sleep is important. If you’re unable to resolve your insomnia after a few weeks, seek the assistance of a medical professional. Your health is too important.