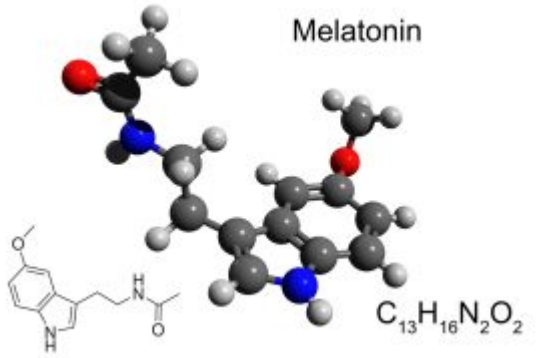
ENCORE: Melatonin—Not Just for Insomnia and Jet Lag

written by Dr. Ronald Hoffman | January 7, 2025



Headlines are sounding alarms over the widespread use of melatonin—especially as a sleep aid for young kids. Dr. Deanna Minich has authored a comprehensive review of melatonin, in which she likens it to vitamin D in its potential utility for a variety of ailments—not just for insomnia and jet lag, but also for metabolic syndrome and diabetes, cancer, cardiovascular disease, brain disorders, autoimmune conditions, eye problems, tinnitus, PCOS, endometriosis, infertility, viral infections, and even ADHD and autism. Additionally, melatonin may confer anti-aging benefits. She affirms its overall safety, but cautions that some formulations are sketchy and may contain contaminants or vastly exceed or undershoot their claimed melatonin content. She discusses how modern life, with its ever-present artificial light, shift work, and travel across time zones may disrupt our circadian rhythms and put us in a state of darkness deprivation, with consequent melatonin depletion. For many conditions less is more, and use in children should be limited to special cases. Dr. Minich also emphasizes that lifestyle factors like properly timed light and darkness exposure, blue blocker glasses and screen apps, exercise and diet are cornerstones to optimal melatonin production, with melatonin supplements constituting only part of a holistic approach.