

Double-barreled Weapon against Alzheimer's as Near as the Bathroom Cabinet

Researchers in China, Japan, Spain, Greece, the Netherlands, the US, and Turkey have recently zeroed in on a common supplement that has doubled-barreled benefits in the fight against Alzheimer's disease. Well-known by travelers as an aid to cope with jet lag, melatonin may help prevent Alzheimer's disease through its potent antioxidant properties. It can also ease sleep-disruption and sundowning in Alzheimer's victims, according to recently published studies.

Sundowning, a typical symptom of Alzheimer's disease, gets its name because it usually occurs around sundown. Alzheimer's victims often display increased agitation and disorientation during the late afternoon or early evening.

"I've always kept a supply of melatonin," says Dr. Phyllis Staff, a psychologist whose father had Alzheimer's disease. "I've used it to combat jet lag for many years, but I didn't realize it could help my father."

"For years, at dusk, Dad would put on his cap and jacket and head out the door to 'go home.' A couple of times he made it out to the street unnoticed. My mother and I are grateful to a compassionate police force that picked him up, but it would have been better to use melatonin to help him stop sundowning."

Melatonin, a hormone produced by the pineal gland in the brain, regulates sleep and wakefulness in humans. Largely ignored by pharmaceutical companies because they cannot patent natural substances, melatonin is inexpensive and readily available over-the-counter in drugstores.

Melatonin's benefits extend to dementia prevention. Able to pass through the blood/brain barrier, it exhibits powerful antioxidant effects in the brain. Researchers have found that melatonin combats oxidative stress and reduces the tangles and plaques typical of Alzheimer's disease.

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Visit the website, alzheimersfree.com, for more information on preventing dementia. The site features the new book, "128 Ways to Prevent Alzheimer's and Other Dementias" and offers articles and book selections targeting prevention techniques. Visitors may also download a free copy of Dr. Staff's newest report, "Five Common Supplements that Help Prevent Alzheimer's Disease."

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