



Could Melatonin be ‘Breast’s New Best Friend’?

Melatonin is the hormone released by the pineal gland in a daily rhythm, with a surge in the middle of the night during sleep, around 2:00 AM. Melatonin controls wake and sleep patterns. While supplementation with melatonin for sleep benefit is well established, its role in breast cancer treatment and prevention is lesser known.

First, a quick overview: estrogen is proliferative, meaning it stimulates growth. In a woman’s menstrual cycle, estradiol (a major estrogen product in the ovaries) is important for the growth and regeneration of the endometrium (the mucous membrane lining the uterus, which thickens during the menstrual cycle in preparation for possible implantation of an embryo). It is also responsible for the development of breast tissue at puberty and influences breast cells throughout life, which might result in fibrocystic breasts, breast swelling or even breast cancer.

Because melatonin has been shown to be capable of disrupting estrogen-mediated cellular pathways, researchers hypothesize that the disruption of melatonin production increases estrogenic stimulation of breast and cancer cells. Studies show that circadian disruption, specifically night shift work, is correlated with an increased risk of developing breast cancer, so much so that women who work night shifts are found to have breast cancer rates well above normal. Additionally, women who live in neighborhoods with large amounts of illumination from outside light have a higher rate of breast cancer than do



to produce these products. Melatonin is synthesized in the plants that produce coffee, tea, wine and beer. However, remember coffee beans and tea leaves naturally contain caffeine.

Foods containing melatonin or induce the natural production of melatonin:

almonds
apples
bananas
barley
beer
cherries
coffee
tart cherry juice
fennel seeds

ginger
grapes
grape juice
kiwi
milk
oats
oranges
peppers
pineapple

radishes
rice
spinach
sunflower seeds
strawberries
sweet corn
tea
turkey
tomatoes
wine

For More Information on This, Call Today to Set Up an Appointment

