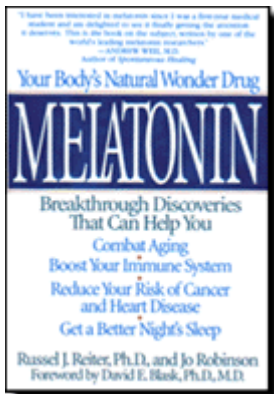


LE Magazine September 1996

## REVIEW

## Your Body's Natural Wonder Drug Melatonin



## Melatonin

By Russel Reiter, Ph.D. and Jo Robinson

If you are a longtime member of The Life Extension Foundation, you've read a great deal about melatonin. These days, you can't turn on the TV or go into a store without hearing about it. Besides, if you're one of the millions who are already taking melatonin, you don't need to be convinced of its benefits.

But a quick scanning of the book *Melatonin* by Russel Reiter; Ph.D. and Jo Robinson makes you feel that you've just begun to scratch the surface of the vast amount of information available about melatonin. The truth is that, unless you've read the book *Melatonin*, you're still in the dark about "the hormone of darkness."

## THE MELATONIN SCIENTIST

Russel Reiter, the world's leading authority on melatonin has spent his career investigating the mysteries of this critical hormone. Thirty years ago, Dr. Reiter was the first scientist to discover an important biological function for melatonin regulating seasonal breeding in animals. That discovery launched him on an odyssey of discovery, which culminated 3 years ago with his finding that melatonin is the body's most potent antioxidant.

Dr. Reiter's new book on melatonin (with Jo Robinson) discusses all that is currently known about the hormone in clear, engaging language. The book is rich in scientific detail and contains 46 pages of references.

To his credit, Dr. Reiter does not hype melatonin. Instead, he carefully weighs and measures the scientific evidence, gleaning what is known from animal studies and critically examining to what extent these findings can be applied to humans

## Female Longevity

The end result is even more compelling. For example, Reiter explains that five separate studies have shown that older women produce more melatonin than older men-suggesting a possible explanation for the long-observed female longevity factor." He details findings showing a marked correlation between brain functioning in older age and melatonin levels.

## SHIELDING DNA FROM FREE RADICALS

Reiter explains melatonin's effects on the immune system of aging animals and determines whether or not these actions also apply to humans. Most importantly, he shows how melatonin fits in with the free radical theory of aging.

He explains that melatonin is found in greatest abundance in the nucleus of the cell, where it shields the DNA molecule itself from free radical damage better than any other known substance. Reiter describes his own studies in which melatonin has protected DNA from free radicals generated by radiation, carcinogens, bacterial toxins and most important-the process of using oxygen for fuel.

## NEW INFORMATION ABOUT MELATONIN

Reiter's book is filled with information that hasn't been published elsewhere. Among the new subject areas covered in the book are the following:

- The relationship between daytime light exposure and melatonin production
- The effect of nighttime "light pollution" on your melatonin levels

- The interaction between melatonin and common medications
- Melatonin's potential to protect cancer
- Melatonin's heart protective role
- Melatonin's mood altering effects
- Who should not take melatonin and why
- Why melatonin's sleep-enhancing effects are vastly superior to standard medications
- The strength and weaknesses of various melatonin preparations including time-release formulas, sublingual tablets, and fast-release tablets

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