



THE CHEMICAL DISRUPTERS OF SLEEP

What you put into your body during the day affects its functioning both throughout the day and during the night.

Many substances have the potential to interfere with sleep.

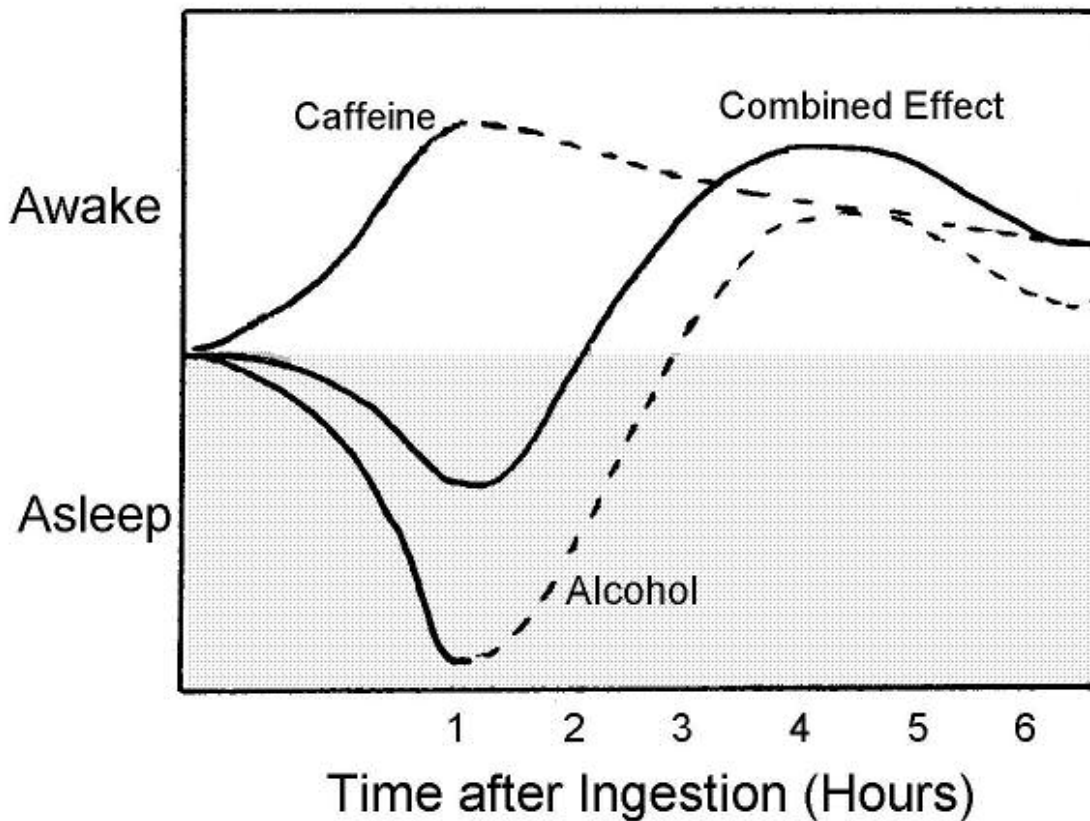
To achieve sufficient restful sleep it is important to reduce intake of these chemicals to a minimum.

Caffeine

Caffeine is a stimulant drug found not only in coffee, but also in tea, cocoa, cola drinks chocolate and in some prescription and over-the-counter cold and pain relief preparations.

Its adverse effects can last for up to 14 hours.

Caffeine-containing drinks give a temporary energy boost because they draw on the body's reserves of energy-giving glycogen and convert it into glucose (sugar). Repeatedly drawing from this energy bank means reserves are quickly depleted and you feel constantly tired. However, restorative sleep is also denied you because caffeine stimulates the nervous system and increases adrenaline production, keeping you wide awake and anxious.



Illicit Drugs

Many illegal, so called recreational drugs, cause sleep disturbance during use and withdrawal.

Disruption to sleep patterns is caused by central nervous system depressants such as cannabis as well as by stimulants such as amphetamines.

Alcohol

Alcohol may send you to sleep quickly, but you are likely to wake in the night owing to a "rebound" effect.

Alcohol with caffeine is even more disruptive. Alcohol may initially suppress the stimulating effect of caffeine, but you are likely to wake in the early hours of the morning when the effect of the alcohol has worn off.

Nicotine

The nicotine in tobacco stimulates the nervous system, raises blood pressure and alters breathing. It also triggers adrenaline release which inhibits the restorative benefits of sleep.

Smokers tend to have lighter more broken sleep than non smokers.

Prescribed Medicines

All drugs have side-effects and a common side-effect of some is sleep disturbance.

If you have difficulty sleeping and you are taking any prescription medicine, **do not stop taking the medication**, but discuss the matter with your doctor.