

4.1 Can You Sleep Well?

In this section, I will talk about sleeping, especially for elderly people. A lot of elderly people have sleeping problems such as waking up frequently during the night, waking up early in the morning etc., but I would like you to know that actually this is very natural.

When we are fetuses or babies, we repeat cycles of sleeping and waking for short periods around the clock. This condition is similar to the sleep pattern of animals. Only after 3 months of age, do we begin to sleep for longer periods at one time. In the case of children, this would be for 8 to 10 hours, and in the case of adults, it would be 4 to 8 hours, depending on their lifestyle. But once we retire from our job, we go back to a sleeping cycle that is similar to a babies'. Therefore, elderly people wake up a lot.

Also, sometimes there is actually a reason that older people need to wake up during sleep. The blood circulation of the brain may become low while we are sleeping and because the blood vessels of elderly people are hardened, this may lead to a lack of oxygen in the brain. In this case, it is the natural response of the body to awaken to increase the blood circulation in that area of the body. **Waking up at night is a kind of signal to let people know they need more blood in their brain to prevent cerebral infarction.**

In addition, **elderly people who sleep too well tend to be senile.** This is because brain cells are destroyed during sleep. One of my mentors told a patient who was complaining about how he couldn't sleep, "There is a very good radio program on at midnight. Why don't you listen to it if you can't sleep?" A week later, the patient visited his office and told him, "Since you suggested that I listen to that radio program, I have not been able to listen to it, because I fall asleep before that. Now I'm worried that I'm going to be senile." This is a funny story, but often the reason you can't sleep is a mental problem.

In cases of an inability to sleep, the most common condition is such that the temperature of the brain is too high and cannot lower down. In this case, **sleep will come if the blood circulation of the legs is improved.** It is the same if you cannot sleep because your feet are cold. For either of these conditions try moving your ankles or rubbing the bottoms of your feet.

In the case of not being able to sleep because you are thinking too much while lying in bed, what is most important is to breathe out slowly and long. Please try the breathing technique described in Breathe "OUT" on pg. **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

There are some **checkpoints** that you need to notice.

1. **Do you try to sleep right after bathing?**

If so, it is better to wait for about half an hour to an hour for your body to cool down.

2. **Do you use an ice pillow when your head feels hot?**

If so, please stop using it. Your body tries to warm up your head making it more difficult for you to sleep.

3. **Do you drink before sleeping?**

This will shorten your sleep and become a cause of insomnia.

4. **Lastly, don't count the number of sheep. It just makes you crazy.**