



Accurate Clinic

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Accurate Education

Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM)

Nutraceuticals for Insomnia

Melatonin

- **Evidence of Efficacy:** Consistent evidence for reducing sleep onset latency and improving sleep quality
- **Recommended Dose/Formulation:** 1–5 mg nightly (oral tablet/capsule)
- **Additive/Synergistic Effects:** May be enhanced by selected herbs (e.g., chamomile, lemon balm)
- **Typical Cost:** <\$10/month
- **Key Safety Concerns:** Mild side effects; avoid in autoimmune disorders

Valerian

- **Evidence of Efficacy:** Mixed evidence; some studies show benefit, others do not
- **Recommended Dose/Formulation:** 300–600 mg extract nightly
- **Additive/Synergistic Effects:** Synergy with hops and passionflower; combination products
- **Typical Cost:** \$10–\$30/month
- **Key Safety Concerns:** Mild GI upset, headache; purity concerns

Passionflower

- **Evidence of Efficacy:** Promising, but limited clinical data
- **Recommended Dose/Formulation:** 250–500 mg extract nightly
- **Additive/Synergistic Effects:** Synergy with valerian and hops
- **Typical Cost:** \$10–\$30/month
- **Key Safety Concerns:** Mild sedation, dizziness

Lemon Balm

- **Evidence of Efficacy:** Some evidence for improved sleep quality
- **Recommended Dose/Formulation:** 300–600 mg extract nightly
- **Additive/Synergistic Effects:** May enhance effects of valerian, chamomile
- **Typical Cost:** \$10–\$30/month
- **Key Safety Concerns:** Mild GI upset, allergic reactions

Chamomile

- **Evidence of Efficacy:** Limited evidence; not superior to placebo in high-quality trials
- **Recommended Dose/Formulation:** 400–1600 mg extract or tea nightly
- **Additive/Synergistic Effects:** May complement melatonin and lemon balm
- **Typical Cost:** <\$10–\$20/month
- **Key Safety Concerns:** Mild allergy (esp. in ragweed allergy)

Ashwagandha

- **Evidence of Efficacy:** Promising for sleep onset and quality; more research needed
- **Recommended Dose/Formulation:** 300–600 mg extract nightly
- **Additive/Synergistic Effects:** May complement other adaptogens/herbs
- **Typical Cost:** \$15–\$30/month
- **Key Safety Concerns:** GI upset, drowsiness

Magnesium

- **Evidence of Efficacy:** May reduce sleep latency in older adults; low-quality evidence
- **Recommended Dose/Formulation:** 400–800 mg (oxide/citrate/glycinate) nightly
- **Additive/Synergistic Effects:** May complement melatonin and herbal products
- **Typical Cost:** <\$10/month
- **Key Safety Concerns:** Soft stool, GI upset; caution in renal impairment

Hops

- **Evidence of Efficacy:** Limited evidence; mainly in combination with valerian/passionflower
- **Recommended Dose/Formulation:** 200–400 mg extract nightly
- **Additive/Synergistic Effects:** Synergy with valerian and passionflower
- **Typical Cost:** \$10–\$20/month
- **Key Safety Concerns:** Mild sedation, allergy

Chinese Herbal Formulas (e.g., CLMD, suanzaoren, guipi decoction)

- **Evidence of Efficacy:** Robust efficacy in network meta-analysis; superior to conventional meds for sleep quality
- **Recommended Dose/Formulation:** Per product label; varies by formula
- **Additive/Synergistic Effects:** Multi-herb combinations may enhance efficacy
- **Typical Cost:** \$20–\$60/month+
- **Key Safety Concerns:** Herb-drug interactions; purity concerns

Overview:

Melatonin and select Chinese herbal formulas have the strongest evidence for improving insomnia symptoms, while valerian, passionflower, lemon balm, chamomile, ashwagandha, and magnesium show variable but promising effects.

Synergy

Synergistic benefits are most notable for combinations such as valerian with hops and passionflower, and for multi-herb Chinese formulas. Aromatherapy with numerous essential oils offers significant synergy with oral herbal formulations for insomnia. Essential oils with significant content of Myrcene and Linalool may be particularly helpful. Exercise can also be very important for insomnia.

Safety

Most supplements are low cost and well tolerated, but kava is not generally recommended due to liver toxicity. Purity/regulation concerns apply to all herbal products. Data on long-term safety and optimal combinations remain limited in the literature.

