

5-HTP

Why You May Need Sustained Release



by Margy Squires

Serotonin is a neurotransmitter that communicates messages to you.

What is it telling you? Perhaps it is whispering softly go to sleep, go to sleep.

Or shouting urgently pain control needed now! Maybe the message is don't worry, be happy. Sleep. Pain. Mood. The 3 faces of serotonin. Now look in the mirror and ask yourself, what's my face telling me?

A mirror only reflects. Chances are if you are low in serotonin, your ability to sleep, control pain and be happy will be reflected in the mirror and in how you feel as well. Maintaining adequate levels of serotonin ensure this helpful messenger is around and sends the messages you want to hear.

One problem is studies show even serotonin reuptake drugs (SSRIs), often prescribed for low serotonin levels, do not stay in the body very long. Interestingly, researchers added sustained release (SR) form of 5-HTP to the antidepressant to help maintain efficacy. The addition of 5-HTP SR resulted in better symptom control for anxiety, pain and/or depression because brain levels of serotonin remained more stable.

Many conditions that show a low serotonin level include mental disorders, chronic pain, fibromyalgia, SEID (ME/chronic fatigue) and insomnia. You may have symptoms that indicate low serotonin too. Such as a high sex drive as serotonin affects arousal. Perhaps you feel irritable or moody as serotonin is one of your happy neurotransmitters. You struggle with food control and cravings since

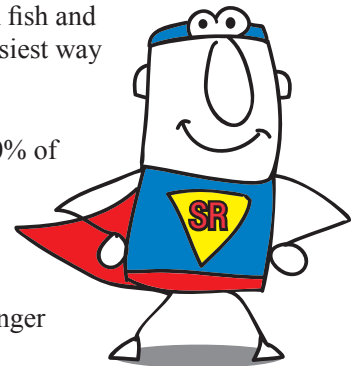
“Keep the brain levels of serotonin steady-state with a sustained release form of 5-HTP.”

serotonin stimulates satiety. In his book on 5-HTP, naturopathic Michael Murray offers a full chapter of how to use 5-HTP for weight control. Did you also know 5-HTP receptors in the intestinal tract help control your bowel movements and GI function? There are 5-HTP receptors throughout the body, responsible for a wide array of daily tasks beyond eating, sleeping and elimination. 5-HTP is

involved in motor skills, wound healing, body temperature and cardiovascular homeostatic via nerve messaging in the endocrine system. These activities and much more than this article can cover confirm the significance for keeping your serotonin levels as normal as possible.

You can increase serotonin levels with other therapies besides SSRIs. It appears exposure to bright light helps, particularly if you suffer from seasonal affective disorder (SAD). Exercise raises endorphins to boost mood. Eating foods high in tryptophan such as turkey, salmon, nuts, cheese and eggs. Vitamin D and Omega-3 fatty acids found in fish and krill help serotonin production. De-stress, as stress saps serotonin. These efforts are all good but the easiest way to boost 5-HTP levels is via supplementation.

5-HTP given as a supplement is an effective serotonin building block (precursor). Studies show that 70% of oral 5-HTP is absorbed and easily crosses the blood-brain barrier to increase levels of brain serotonin. And 5-HTP does not need the additional help of an SSRI to do its job! 5-HTP is safe and well tolerated. If you are on an SSRI and considering a more natural way to boost serotonin, know that supplements and SSRIs should not be combined except by your health care professional. So be smart. Keep the brain levels of serotonin steady-state with a sustained release form of 5-HTP. Less dosing, longer lasting benefits! How's your face in the mirror looking now?



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- ◆ 5-HTP the Feel Good Nutrient
- ◆ 5-HTP, Control Those Carbs
- ◆ 5-HTP, Take it Right!
- ◆ 5-HTP, The Serotonin Solution