

Caspar ([00:00](#)):

Do you have trouble sleeping in today's episode, we're gonna show you how you can improve that because some 50 to 70 million people in the US suffer from insomnia. And even according to the CDC, one in three adults don't get enough sleep. And the truth of the matter is there are so many culprits it's not just stress or something, you know, in your health. One little thing, you know, there was actually a study that I sent out recently to people on Instagram that research showed even the smallest amount of light, light, that could be your LED power light on your cable box can impact your sleep. And those adverse effects of poor sleep could actually impact your cardiovascular and metabolic health and range in all sorts of things that lead to disease. So we're gonna show you how to turn that all around today and turn the odds in your favor and get quality regenerative, sleep so many need it.

Caspar ([00:54](#)):

And that's what we're gonna be talking today about. So to do this, I didn't wanna just talk about this myself. We're bringing on Nicole Ritieni, a rockstar nurse at our clinic, the New York Center for Innovative Medicine, and also a graduate of the Institute for Integrative Nutrition and currently studying to be a nurse practitioner. So, Nicole, thank you so much for coming on. I wanted to start by asking you about what you are seeing on a day-to-day basis, and basically what are patients saying to you when they talk about their sleep or their quality of sleep?

Nicole ([01:28](#)):

So, thanks for having me yeah, here at the center, one of the most common issues that we hear patients experience is lack of sleep and it could be either falling asleep or staying asleep. But it becomes a very frustrating issue for them because it's not always easy for people to get to the root cause of why it's happening.

Caspar ([01:48](#)):

Yeah. Well, you know, one of the things that I think you need to bring up when you're talking about lack of sleep is how illness impacts that too, because there is a lot of people that are gonna have sleepless nights. And I think that's something you have to kind of push apart and differentiate from people that actually aren't able to sleep and are diseased. So what are some of the things that happen to us physiologically when we're fighting infections or fighting off the disease?

Nicole ([02:18](#)):

I would say a really nice way to kind of look at this as the traditional Chinese medicine model. It does a good job at explaining how it embraces our body clock and how each organ corresponds to a specific (inaudible) these particular times are utilized to maintain wellness of a patient or fight in the active disease process. So interestingly enough, when a patient is here going through any sort of treatment the typical hours that you're sleeping are when the major organs like large intestines, liver, gall bladder, and the lungs are at their strongest point. So on a physiological level, these organs play a major role in ridding the body of infection. So sleep disruption is very possible because all of the energy is going more so to there rather than the areas that provide quality sleep for a patient.

Caspar ([03:07](#)):

Now, when you recommend things to patients, where do you start? Where, where do you even start to look? What are the questions you're asking the patients who are saying, Nicole I'm just having terrible sleep. What can I do?

Nicole ([03:19](#)):

The first question I usually ask, unless there's some obvious, you know, physical reason for it is their stress levels. I think that more often than not a reason, someone can't sleep has something to do with their stress or emotional status. So that's a big one. I ask them another one I'll ask is what their sleep environment looks like or what they're doing that hour or two before bed, because this is a really critical time as well for that wind down process and really leaving that flight or fight phase we're staying in most of the day and more of a restful phase. And lastly, sometimes I just simply ask them what they think the reason is that they're not sleeping. Often times, a patient might know what the root cause might be or what the issue is, but they don't know how to get there. So that's where we come in and can give them helpful tools and to move forward.

Caspar ([04:04](#)):

I really like that question because I feel like so many times people know the answer, they just kind of throw it out there and want confirmation from someone who's a professional. But if we use that intuition, we usually get what it is. We usually know we're stressing. We usually know we drank too much caffeine during the day. We usually know, Hey, I left the TV on as I'm trying to go to sleep and that screwed it up. But going to caffeine, especially because there's, there's lots of different opinions on the use of caffeine. And I wanna hear how you feel it impacts and whether or not you recommend it to patients. And if you do at all, is there a cutoff time?

Nicole ([04:40](#)):

So here at the center, I mean a lot of our patients, because they're going through this treatment, we tell them just not to have it because it's just adding another layer of something that could disrupt them. But for the general public, I'm actually pretty neutral on caffeine. I think it really depends on the person. Like me for example, I'm not that sensitive to caffeine. With being in school, for example, I can have class after work and have caffeine at like 5:00 PM and I go to sleep fine. Whereas someone has coffee at 12, one o'clock and they're kind of messed up for the whole night. So I think you have to recognize your own triggers your own patterns, and then take it from there. A lot of experts say six hours before bed avoid it, or don't do it after lunchtime. But this is one of those things where you have to just recognize for yourself how sensitive you are.

Caspar ([05:23](#)):

Yeah. Bringing up that question with enough guests in the past that are researchers, experts, doctors, also, it seems there are like two parts to that. Number one, are you a quick metabolizer? Probably like you are of caffeine in general. That means you could have a little bit later. It doesn't impact you much. It, it really, isn't going to affect you as much and your sleep. Also, I happen to be on the other side of it. I freak out over too much caffeine. I got, 5:00 PM. You said like, hell no, I'd be up all night. Yeah.

Nicole ([05:52](#)):

Caffeinate early.

Caspar ([05:53](#)):

Number two on that is your cutoff time because there are people, if you are a poor metabolizer, there are lots of people I've heard this number past 11:00 AM. You should not have caffeine. Yeah. If you're a good metabolizer, you could probably go into the night even, and still be alright. Now, whether or not because I know the, the half cycle, half-life cycle of, of caffeine, many people can go on for numerous

hours even after you feel it. So it could still disrupt sleep after, you know, a certain amount of time, but you gotta know yourself. Number one and give yourself that cutoff time that makes sense. Now talk about the importance, cuz you mentioned this as well, of a nightly ritual because everyone puts so much stress on their morning ritual. They meditate, yoga, get their water with their lemon squeezed in it. They have it down pat. And then when it comes to go to sleep, it's kind of like, yeah, just get in bed, turn on the TV and hopefully fall asleep at some point. But we know better than that. So tell us about your nightly ritual and even what you would kind of recommend for others to start doing as they start to wind down, get ready for sleep

Nicole ([06:59](#)):

Well before I'll end with what mine is. But the reason I think a nightly ritual in some ways can be more important than waking up and what you do in the morning is because when you wake up, you're fresh, you haven't really had your day yet. You're starting with a blank slate and it's kind of easier to kind of move about your day, depending on the day you had at night. Sometimes it's really hard to unwind and unpack what happened. We, we kind of hold onto a lot. We carry a lot depending on, you know, how you deal with those things. And I think that for an individual when sleeplessness is more of a pattern than just one or two bad nights of sleep here and there, the issue is often them having a hard time of doing that unwind and unwinding and letting go.

Nicole ([07:38](#)):

We're very overstimulated throughout the entire day. So when you create that nightly routine, it almost sends that, it conditions your brain to use that as a precursor to go to bed. So I think having, even if it's just one set thing that you do every single night, you just start to enter that phase of, okay, this means it's time to start winding down and go to sleep. There is, you have again, have to find what works for you. There's so many different things like meditation works very nicely for me, but for some people they just do not resonate with traditional meditation practices. So find something that's meditative. It doesn't just have to be meditation. So it can be journaling, writing about what went well and what, you know, even what didn't go well during your day. So you leave it on the paper, it can be reading a book that just kind of lets you be more in the present moment and out of your head.

Nicole ([08:25](#)):

Sometimes just spending a few minutes to talk to someone that you care about and you feel safe with about what went on through your day. Just kind of lets you release whatever happened. I, I notice with patients specifically, even with myself, if I'm having a hard time going to bed, it's usually cuz my brain will not turn off. Something might have happened where it just keeps running over and over and you just can't settle your, you know, your nervous system and enter that restful state. So I think finding what truly makes you just feel calm and relaxed. It could be the simplest thing is really the most important. We kind of look for like these very complex solutions and sometimes it's really just simple.

Caspar ([09:03](#)):

Yeah. And I think there's a difference also between truly finding calm and relaxed and activating parasympathetic and finding comfort in what you usually do. Meaning TV, check your phone, that's comfort. It's almost addictive, right? Yeah. But, but it is actually stimulating your sympathetic nervous system. So I, I would say at least 30 minutes to an hour, probably even more put that stuff away. And I think part of this idea of pillow conditioning and sleep hygiene is don't even keep it anywhere where you're able to like too many people keep the phone where they're able to reach it. I put it like just outta

reach it's on airplane mode. It ain't gonna buzz or like do anything out of state outta mind because even that idea of having it within your reach is kind of stimulating your sympathetic nervous system. You start to get Phantom buzzes.

Caspar ([09:50](#)):

I heard like people like wake up and hear their phone and nothing happened. It's just, the brain is triggered. It's it's wired to be like it's right there. Something may go off. So I think keeping that away is a big one. Now another thing you gotta bring into this discussion, we're talking about sleep is the use of supplements for good sleep. There's lots of different things, lots of different supplements out there. I think we could both agree that we are not usually on board, at least for the long term with sleeping pills. Let's say things that actually, you know, are pharmaceutical or chemical derived, NiQuil, all of that, that does not put us in a really good regenerative sleep position. We become addicted to those and it actually diminishes good sleep on your own in producing hormones to get you to sleep. But what are the supplements you recommend or use yourself for quality sleep?

Nicole ([10:40](#)):

The one that works best for me, I know a big one we all know of, and this isn't for me personally, but melatonin is something we hear about all the time. I don't think there's anything bad about it. I think at a low dose, some people do really well with that, but I don't think it's the only one. I think we just hear about it the most. Melatonin personally does nothing for me. And I think it depends on what the root of your issue is. I probably don't have an issue with melatonin, my issue is something else. So for me, magnesium is like key for that's like my break glass in case of emergency. If I really can't go to bed, it's making some sort of tea with magnesium in it. It stimulates GABA, which is an inhibitory neurotransmitter and it completely slows brain activity.

Nicole ([11:19](#)):

So especially if you're one of those people, like I'm very predisposed to my brain just won't stop at night. I think about my whole day, I think about the next day. And it works like a charm for me where, when I take this, you know, in that hour time period before bed, I really start to shut down. And like anything else, I do feel that taking it every single night. I'm not really a fan of that. I think use it when you need to. And if you can fall asleep on your own, like don't use anything at all because you do get tolerant to certain things and you want to be able to have it when you really need it. The other nice thing about magnesium is you can find it in certain foods as well. If you wanted to add those into your diet through the day like almonds, spinach, black beans, avocados, very basic foods that most people like. So it's very accessible and most of us are very deficient in magnesium. So it's, it's a good one all around to add in and try if you're not sleeping well.

Caspar ([12:11](#)):

So let me ask you, because you brought this up, this idea of diet and foods you're eating that can actually help with your sleep. Is there a specific diet or dietary recommendations that can absolutely help with someone getting regenerative sleep or even, you know, go, rules to abide by let's say I know some people say don't eat past 8:00 PM, right? Because you don't want digestive function and energy going in at that time late when you're trying to kind of calm down, go to sleep. But what, what do you say?

Nicole ([12:42](#)):

Yeah, I, I agree with that. I think every now and then if you have a late night meal, it's not gonna kill you, but you know, for the most part, yeah. You want all of your energy to go through that restorative phase of sleeping, not to your intestines and your stomach. But I think, you know, sleep, we concentrate on the end of the day, but I think the problem of sleep is a full day issue. You have to look at what you're doing your entire day. So, you know, making sure you're simply just eating like a whole food diet. Avoiding things in packages if, and when you can just really getting those nutrients, I mean, it's really convenient to reach for those foods that are already ready for you, but they, they have a lot of additives and things that disrupt every system of your body, even if you don't realize it.

Nicole ([13:21](#)):

So, you know, for me, if I'm eating something that's really high in sodium and not like good quality salt, the sodium that's in processed foods, I I'm really thirsty all night and then I'm not sleeping well, cuz I keep waking up with that. Staying really hydrated throughout the day and not just chugging a bunch of water before bed where you're up going to the bathroom all night. So it's finding that balance of just really whole healthy foods, good hydration. And when you need to add in that supplement at the end of the day, go ahead. But you just wanna think that you're setting up your body with, you know, all the proper tools it needs, where at night it's ready to just kind of settle down and relax and it's not compensating for all your choices during the day.

Caspar ([14:00](#)):

There's something to be said about that, right? We are compensating at night for our choices during the day. Yeah. Even something as simple as getting outside and getting some sunlight or just, you know, even on a cloudy day you'll you'll receive that sunlight that activates and your retina and everything that activates the cortisol that activates those daytime, that then will help activate melatonin at the right time or going out and watching a sunset already starts to activate that melatonin inside you. So like nature gives us the cues and then the decisions we make throughout the day basically dictate how we sleep. Right? It's, it's really phenomenal that all these things out today, even hydration everything, we're basically setting ourselves up to sleep better or sleep worse by every single action we do during the day.

Nicole ([14:46](#)):

I actually, if I know I'm gonna have a, you know, a busy day, say tomorrow's a very busy day for me, I literally make specific choices today. So I know I'm gonna sleep great. You know, it's not just that even just that hour before bed, that's just, you know, part of the bigger picture. So.

Caspar ([15:01](#)):

Now, EMF let's say, let's talk about this idea of all radiation around you. Is that something you see as impacting people's sleep and are there any recommendations you give to patients about, Hey, watch what you put around you when you sleep?

Nicole ([15:18](#)):

Yeah. So you know, we know EMFs are manmade frequencies and they're all over the place. It's impossible to completely avoid them. But research does show, it interferes with our melatonin production and that's our major sleep hormone. So it can cause an issue with that. If you didn't already have one you know, like I said, we are fortunately are so exposed. If you can remove those items from your immediate area when you sleep great, but that's not always possible. So something that we have here at the center is a technology called YouMatrix that we can offer to patients. You know, like I have it

on my phone, on my laptop and essentially it just helps to scramble those frequencies and turn them into ones our bodies can better process. So there's a bunch of these things that exist. We, we happen to have that here and offer it to patients. So you have to, you know, do what you can, but there are always little ways to mitigate these things.

Caspar ([16:09](#)):

Yeah. You really gotta take an audit of your bedroom. You gotta like stop and see what's in your bedroom and see how you're using your bedroom. I'll bring this up really quickly because I think a lot of people are struggling with this. And I know when, since the pandemic hit, so many people are working from home. And so many people are working from bed, which is absolutely horrible I have to say. Your brain starts to associate your bed with stressful emails, calls, complaints from your boss or something like that. And you will find it harder and harder. Your bed is a sanctuary. I don't wanna see like you working on your laptop or anything like that. And then complaining about getting poor sleep. I also think you should look at what is on or around your bed. Is it cluttered? Your mind may be cluttered too, does it have extension cords running under it like that again is not just, you know, that you're powering your cell phone right there.

Caspar ([17:01](#)):

That's not good. You matrix will help I think, but you might have cords running underneath you the whole time giving off some EMF as well. So I think it's really important to take an audit. Position your bed as the sanctuary only for sleeping. It is sacred. It is a place you regenerate. It is the place where you heal at night where everything kind of where you, you, you get this great sleep and you wake up feeling great. So I think it's really important. If we're gonna talk about sleep, we look at the bed itself and say, this is a place where I will have my best sleep and I will make sure of it by getting rid of anything. Now, last question for you, what are three things you're hoping people could take away from this to really get that deep sleep and regenerative sleep?

Nicole ([17:48](#)):

I would say that first and foremost, really checking in on how you're doing on a stressful and emotional level. It's impossible to, you know, to go through every day and not experience stress, but I think for our health all around, you have to find those ways that you can really let go of that and not hold onto it. And your sleep, I think is one of the biggest things that will show you how well you're doing at that. So that's one of them. The second thing is really that all day concept where it's not just what you're doing right before bed, because that's not really gonna cut it. If you're having sleep problems, you need to take inquiry of your entire day. Even if it's writing down, I slept really great last night. What did my day look like yesterday? I think that's really beneficial to actually see it written down in front of you. And lastly, just, I think it's good not to rely on supplements. If you can focus on the other two. I think that's great. Supplements are a nice tool to use now and then, but I think often patients use them so frequently that they don't have that break glass in case of emergency, like I said before when they really need it. So I would say those three, I find to be really important and hopefully helpful for people moving forward.

Caspar ([18:53](#)):

Yeah. Great. A few other things that came up while we were going through this and I'll just throw 'em out there as actionable things because YouMatrix is wonderful for the cell phone for laptops and everything. If you're looking for environment in generally or saying, Hey guys, like I, I do have electronics in my room. I'm not gonna get rid of all of them. I do think also you could look at something called

somavedic. I had Juraj on who runs that company in a podcast. Great for just overall environment enhancing that and kind of mitigating some of those EMFs. And also shungite, like, look to nature itself. There is a rock called shungite that some think is, is from outer space. And it's been here for millions of years and it's crazy how that has C60, which actually can help with EMF and some of the free radicals that come off of that and actually absorb that, which is nuts that you could turn to nature for something we just devised like just in the last few, you know, 20, 30 years with all this EMF. And one other hack that I actually, and I wanna get your opinion on this as well, because I, I actually read about these and put 'em together.

Caspar ([19:56](#)):

I do chamomile tea. I do apple cider vinegar and tart cherry and tart cherry came from Rowe Casa, I interviewed the, the owner there and, and I put the three together, cuz they're all for sleep support. Have you ever heard of that?

Nicole ([20:10](#)):

Sounds like it might taste interesting, but.

Caspar ([20:12](#)):

Tastes horrible.

Nicole ([20:15](#)):

I've actually never really heard the apple cider vinegar, but the other two, I drink chamomile before bed, but the other two I have heard about I've heard they're really great.

Caspar ([20:23](#)):

Yeah. ACV was one of those that, that, you know, everyone says in the morning and I do that in the morning too. I do apple cider vinegar, lemon, hot water in the morning, usually. But at night supposedly it does help melatonin production and some other things and an alkalinity in the, the stomach, which is good for, so I mean there's much more research to be doing, but I, I, if you're looking for hacks in it, I do agree with Nicole though. It comes from the small decisions you make throughout the day, how you're gonna sleep. So start from the first thing in the morning and just make those healthy decisions throughout. And you will see yourself sleeping better and better. And it's not like a, a overnight thing, let's say. You don't suddenly go from, I get no sleep to like eight, nine regenerative hours of sleep, it usually happens over time. So Nicole, thank you so much for, for sharing all these tips and your recommendations. And if people wanna learn more about Nicole, they could go to Innovative Medicine.com look her up and nicole@nycim.com. So thank you, Nicole. Thank you.