



Experience the Deepest, Most Delicious Sleep Possible

25 Helpful Suggestions
to Melt in Your Bed!



Women's Midlife Specialist
Dr. Karen Leggett



By Dr. Karen Leggett, The Women's Midlife Specialist
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About Dr. Karen Leggett

Dr. Karen Leggett is a board certified physician in family medicine and geriatrics. She has spent the last 17 years helping and supporting midlife women in balancing their sex (reproductive) hormones, stress (adrenal) hormones, thyroid (metabolic) hormones, and gut (digestive) hormones so they can regain their young little chick spirits.

Dr. Karen Leggett attributes much of her interest in Integrative Medicine, especially Women's Health, to her mother, who was a true "Hormone Maverick", who insisted on the use of Bioidentical Hormones over 35 years ago. Her mother and father are now in their 80's and 90's, and still enjoying a healthy and fully independent life.

"I practice what I teach! I know that we women control the aura of our environment! How we act is dependent upon how we feel, so you have to feel great to really achieve your goals! I had to learn this the hard way, but I am so thankful now for the suffering that I went through because it led me to my passion today - to help YOU." - **Dr. Karen Leggett**



Dr. Leggett is a licensed physician. While she offers general advice on medical-related issues and medical-related subjects on this site (and other places), she is not your physician. The information on this website does not replace your relationship with a qualified health care professional, and is not intended as medical advice. Dr. Leggett bases her opinions on her experiences with many women over many years. Because everyone is different, Dr. Leggett does not express or imply that you as an individual will experience improvement in hormone-related symptoms by using Young Hormones products. Dr. Leggett urges you to make informed decisions about your health, and to always check with your physician before starting or stopping medications, supplements and/or topically-applied creams or suppositories that contain bioidentical hormones. If you ask Dr. Leggett a specific question(s), and she replies, that reply(s) is intended as general guidance based on her experiences with many women over many years. If Dr. Leggett replies to any of your questions, she is still not your physician. You will not have a doctor-patient relationship with Dr. Leggett through this website, Facebook, or any other social site.

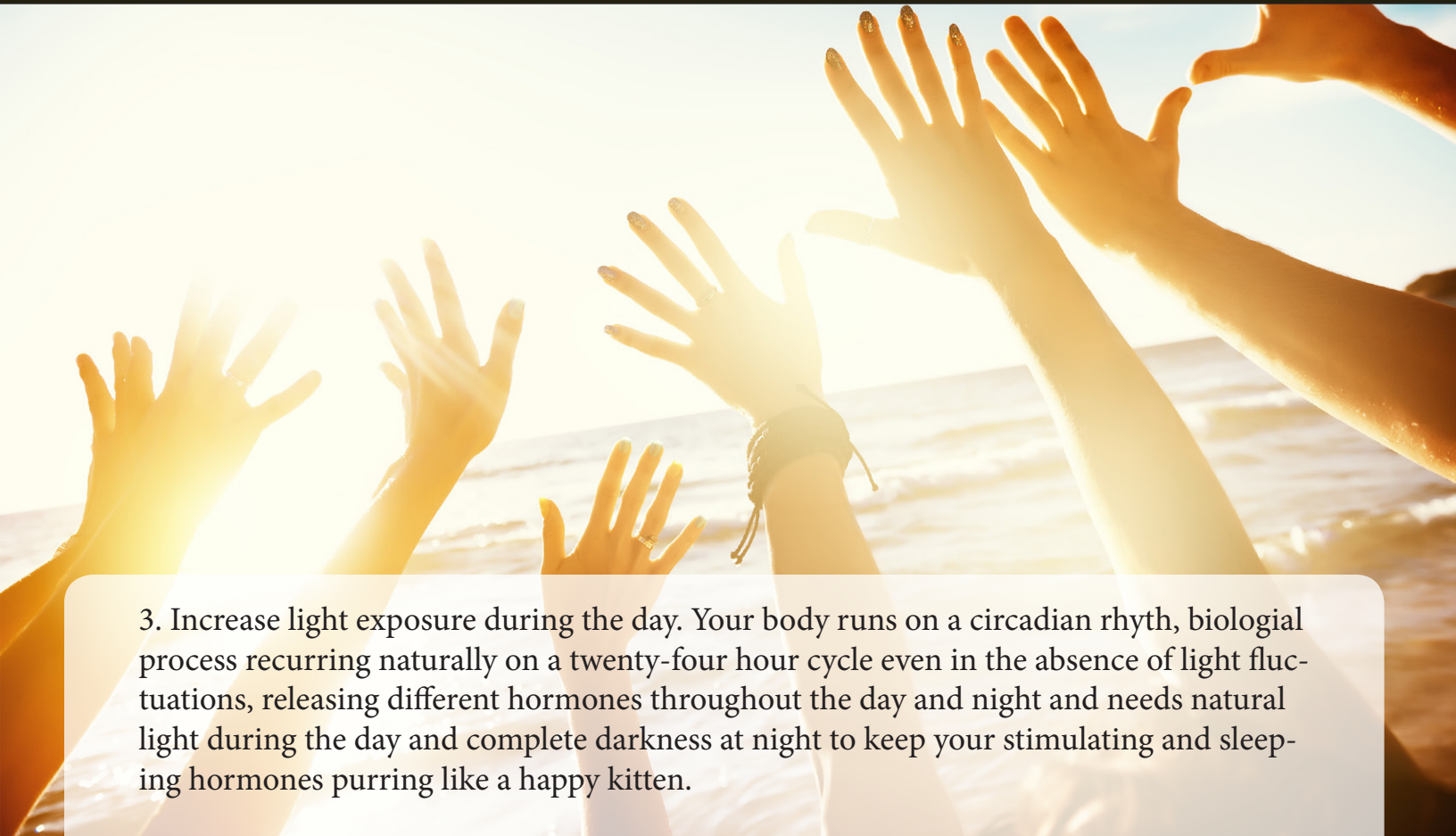


5 Daytime Duties to Drive You Down the Right Path

**INSTANT
HUMAN
JUST ADD
COFFEE**

1. Stop consuming caffeine after 2:00 p.m. This includes tea, coffee and chocolate. Caffeine is a stimulant and will disrupt sleep if it is not *fully* out of your system before bed.
2. Exercise in the morning or afternoon. Earlier the better. Exercise helps deepen sleep, but it also releases chemicals which temporarily increase energy, alertness and motivation! Exercising in the late afternoon or before bed can disrupt your ability to fall asleep.





3. Increase light exposure during the day. Your body runs on a circadian rhythm, biological process recurring naturally on a twenty-four hour cycle even in the absence of light fluctuations, releasing different hormones throughout the day and night and needs natural light during the day and complete darkness at night to keep your stimulating and sleeping hormones purring like a happy kitten.

Suggestions to get your creative juices flowing to accomplish this include:

- a. Remove your sunglasses in the morning and let light onto your face on your way to work.
- b. Take a work break outside in the sunlight or eat lunch outside if possible. (This is also good for the digestion of food!)
- c. Exercise or take a walk outside.
- d. Walk your dog while there is still sunlight.
- e. Open the blinds or curtains every day and first thing in the morning.
- f. Get full spectrum light bulbs for all lamps in your house.
- g. Move your desk or work space closer to a window.
- h. If necessary, consider using a light therapy box which can simulate sunshine and be especially useful for short winter days.



4. If you are accustomed to taking naps, or feel you need a nap, learn to meditate instead. Meditating for 20 minutes is equivalent to 90 minutes of sleep! Now that's a wonderful way to save time too! If you are new to meditating, give yourself 21 days of practice before expecting miracles. After that, you will be hooked!

Timing of your meditation is also important. Try to leave at least 4 hours between meditating and bedtime.

If you feel you must nap, make sure you limit naps to preferably 90 minutes at most. And use the same guideline on timing your naps as you would be timing meditation. Leave at least 4 hours between your nap and bedtime.

5. Don't drink any fluids within 2 hours of going to bed. This will reduce the likelihood or minimize the frequency of needing to get up and go to the bathroom during the night.





1-2 Hours Before Bed:

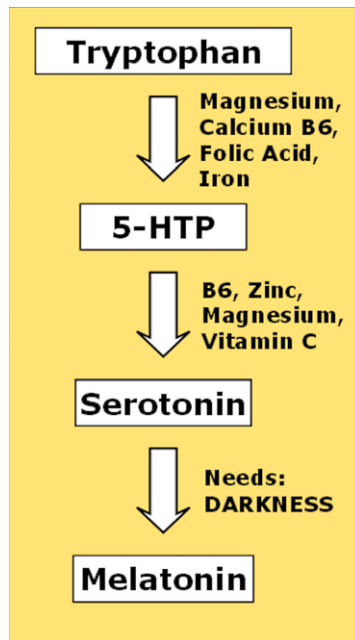
1. Avoid nicotine before bed. While you should quit smoking all together, having tobacco before bed will make falling asleep difficult since nicotine is a stimulant. Additionally, all smokers should be aware that as you sleep, your body eliminates the last nicotine you consumed and as the levels reduce, your brain will wake you up to “get more nicotine.” This is what happens naturally with any addiction.

Your body is aware of the levels of nicotine in your body at all times. This is why many smokers wake up in the middle of the night and have difficulty falling asleep. Often a smoker will say, “I always wake up in the middle of the night and can’t go back to sleep. So I finally just get up and smoke a cigarette and then eventually I can go back to sleep.”

2. Avoid alcohol before bed. While alcohol may make you feel sleepy and actually help you fall asleep initially, this effect is short-lived and turns on you with early morning awakening and sleep restlessness. As your liver detoxifies the alcohol from your bloodstream, and your brain registers the alcohol level in the bloodstream dropping, the awakening response is stimulated. Even 2 glasses of wine have shown to prevent normal



3. Have a small snack that contains a hefty dose of tryptophan before you go to bed. Foods high in tryptophan help your body relax and fall asleep because tryptophan is the amino acid that converts to serotonin and melatonin. My favorite food choice before bed is 3-4 ounces of turkey meat which provides about 400mg of tryptophan. Turkey meat is a great night time snack option because not only does it contain NO carbohydrates, it is also very LOW in fat.



Keep in mind that adequate vitamins and minerals are needed in all of your body's enzyme reactions too! So, maintaining adequate nutrition with a foundational nutrient support system is critical for your body. Consider the **Women's Midlife Specialist Savvy Sister Super Support Daily Nutritional Packets** for the most comprehensive and balanced nutrient foundation for all of your body's daily needs!



4. Establish a bedtime ritual. The brain will come to recognize this ritual and in about 3 weeks of sticking to it, will begin preparing to release serotonin and melatonin on cue!

Classic ideas for bedtime rituals may include a warm bath, listening to relaxing music, journaling or reading something spiritual and uplifting. Don't make a mistake of reading a mystery or suspense novel as this can have the opposite effect and stimulate your brain.

You can be creative with designing just the right ritual for you. I like spending a half hour getting out my collection of note cards and writing a very short personal note to someone I haven't connected with in a while - usually a family member of a patient who has passed.



5. Now don't shoot the messenger... but you really need to turn off the TV. Every sleep expert is going to tell you that watching TV, although seemingly relaxing, actually stimulates the mind and can make falling asleep difficult and certainly delayed. The light of the TV, will also challenge your brain from producing its normal melatonin from the tryptophan in your evening snack, or from 5-HTP supplements. In fact, sleep experts recommend not having a television in the bedroom if possible. And if you feel there is possible evidence that TVs emit electromagnetic waves that can alter body functions, you have another reason to remove the TV from your bedroom.

6. Make sure you go to the bathroom right before bed. This will help reduce the likelihood that you will need to go during the evening. Even if you get all snuggled up in bed and then remember that you forgot to use the restroom one last time before bed, make yourself get up and go! You'll thank me in the middle of the night!



7. Wear non-binding socks to bed if your feet get cold. Feet often feel cold before the rest of the body because they have the farthest circulation from the heart. When your feet get cold, you can also end up with feet or leg cramps, which will wake you from the deepest sleep and potentially keep you up the rest of the night. The National Sleep Foundation recommends warming up your feet and hands before you actually get in bed because there appears to be a connection between warm extremities and the brain's acknowledgement that it's time to go to bed!



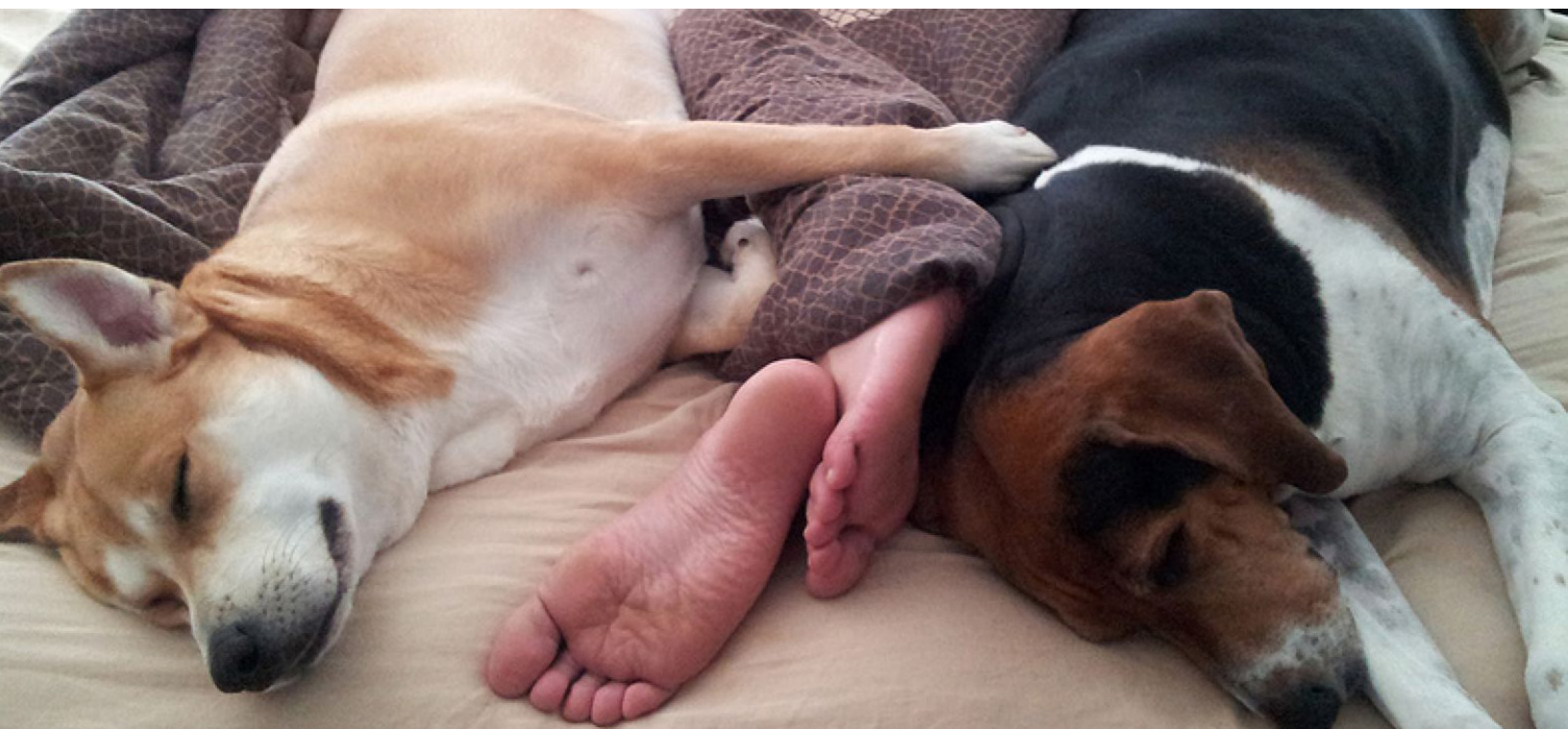
8. If you tend to worry about all the things you still need to do, or experience “brain chatter” where your brain continues to think when it is time to sleep, journaling is a good activity for you to choose as your evening ritual. If you have a lot going on in your life and you are already thinking about the needs of tomorrow, it will be hard for your brain to “let go”.



If this happens to you, write a list of things you have to do the next day before going to bed. Once they are on paper, tell yourself you don't need to think about them again until tomorrow and this way you can put them out of your mind for the rest of the night. You can even put the list by your bedside if you like so that you can feel confident that you can get started on your list right away. This is a very helpful trick for me even today with no sleep issues at all. It actually makes me feel powerful and ready to jump out of bed with a plan in hand!

9. Okay, forgive me for this next one, but kick the animals out of the bed if they have any potential for waking you or rubbing up next to you! I know this is even hard for me, but I actually DID kick my Old English Sheepdog out of the entire bedroom when I was initially getting Deep Sleep mastered. In fact, she then would push up against the bedroom door and snort and lick and scratch off and on throughout the night and I even put a baby-gate up that prevented her from lying against the bedroom door! Whatever it takes... YOU have to be the boss and I promise... they will get over it.

And once you have your sleep routine mastered, if you are an animal lover like me, you will be able to re-introduce your pet into your bed and she / he will no longer disturb your sleep and you will snooze right through their grunts, movements and bed-shaking!





10. Speaking of kicking the pets out... your partner might be a problem if they want to snuggle or move too close when you are trying to sleep. No offense... but they need to stay on their side of the bed when YOU need to sleep. And you need to tell them the truth. A little comment like “Just think honey, when I get better sleep my libido will improve” will go a long way!

And while you are at it... if there are other habits your partner has that may be disturbing your sleep, take a kind and serious approach to discussing them with him and telling your partner what you need.



Bedtime:

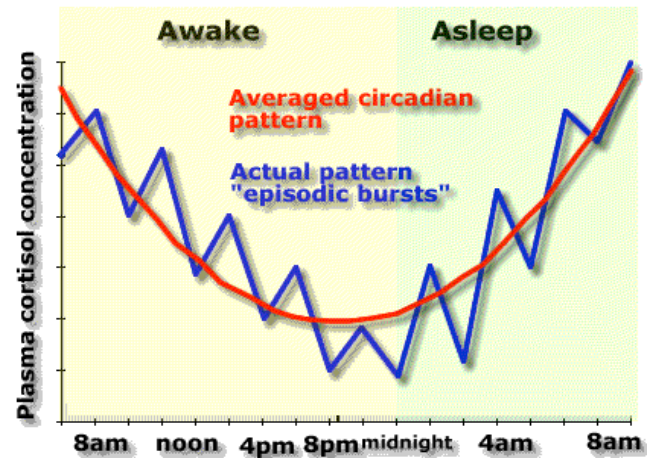
1. Try to be in bed before 10:45 p.m. There is a slight increase in cortisol production by the adrenal glands between 11:00 p.m. and 2:00 a.m. This is what many people call “getting a “second wind.” (This can vary by about an hour so you will need to watch closely what time YOU seem to get that “second wind”.

Most of the time we talk about “averages” of cortisol production by the Adrenal glands. But the truth is, there are “spurts of cortisol” production going on all day long. These “little” spurts may be less pronounced at specific times of the day, but they do still effect you.

If you are still awake around 11:00 p.m., this little “spurt” may just keep you going until 2:00 a.m. when the cortisol levels are again at their lowest.

2. Try to sleep at least 7 hours per night minimum, preferably 8 if possible on most nights.
3. Stick to a fixed bedtime schedule. The body wants to have / and gets accustomed to falling asleep and awaking at certain times and can become confused if your schedule alters frequently. A non scheduled bedtime can result in having trouble falling asleep.
4. Allow your body to wake you up if anyway possible. Use your alarm for back up purposes only. This means that if you are going to bed at 10:30 p.m., 7 - 8 hours of sleep would result in waking around 6:30 a.m. – 7:30 a.m. If you want to wake up earlier, go to bed earlier than 10:30 p.m. For example, I like to wake at 5:00 a.m. and therefore try to be in bed by 9:30 p.m. On weekends I may adjust these hours, however, I commit to 7 hours of sleep on weekdays and 8 hours on weekends.

Cortisol Cycle





5. Sleep in complete darkness, or as close to it as possible. The pineal gland produces melatonin and serotonin in darkness but can be effected by the smallest amount of light including light from your clock or TV / DVD player. Put something in front of these lights if they are to stay in your bedroom, and use blackout shades or drapes if necessary. Remove nightlights if possible and wear an eye mask if unable to remove all lights.
6. Refrain from turning on any light at all during the night, even if you get up to go to the bathroom.
7. Block out noise. Establish this requirement with the rest of the family to assure a quiet house after you go to bed.
8. Keep the bedroom cool and well ventilated. Studies show that cool rooms are much more conducive to sleep than hot rooms, and proper air movement can prevent the room from feeling stuffy, which can make sleep restless.
9. Use comfortable bedding. Non-irritating, soft, breathable materials should be used.



10. If you awaken during the night and it takes longer than thirty minutes to fall back asleep, get up and go to another room and read a recreational, non-interactive book or magazine until drowsy. Do not watch T.V. or engage your brain in thinking. Tossing and turning leads to frustration, which makes falling asleep even more difficult.

Tell Your Doctor if:

1. If you feel a medical condition may be disrupting your sleep. Examples include: pain, sleep apnea, acid reflux, headaches, menopause symptoms such as night sweats, depression, anxiety and stress.
2. If you developed difficulty sleeping after starting a new medication.





When you open your eyes first thing in the morning, there's nothing better than realizing that you just woke from an amazingly refreshing night's sleep and feel happy, thankful, and ready to start Your day!

Unfortunately this isn't a common experience for many women when they enter their midlife years! And what most women don't realize is that the CAUSE of this sleeping disturbance is usually HORMONAL!

Sure, I have my favorite sleep supplements. But mostly because they ADD to the Joy of a deep sleep that returns when a Woman replaces her PROGESTERONE!

As Progesterone declines, the FIRST thing most women notice is a decline in the quality of their sleep. It usually gets worse and worse until eventually You're Praying for a just one good night.

That's HEART BREAKING to me! It is usually so simple to solve!

Progesterone replacement is KEY! I used Progesterone alone for the first 10 years of Bioidentical Hormone Replacement, before I added any Estrogen at all.

Some of my other favorite supplements for an excellent nights sleep is Melatonin - our Sleep Hormone! I love Melatonin because it is also an anti-oxidant and has been shown to decrease the return of breast cancer in women who have already been diagnosed and treated for it. In fact, Melatonin is often used by oncology centers along WITH chemotherapy in the TREATMENT of Breast cancer. Be aware... Melatonin declines drastically as we age, so supplementing with this over the counter hormone with health promoting doses, you are giving your body opportunity it doesn't have otherwise!

Doses of Melatonin vary from 1 mg to 10mg nightly. 20mg nightly happens to be the dose used with Chemotherapy for women being treated for breast cancer, but this dose should be reserved for medical treatment. Excessively high doses can decrease a person's (man or woman), Testosterone levels.

Another supplement I love for healthy deep sleep is L-Theanine. L-Theanine is an amino acid that increases GABA in the brain and thus provides the body a calming effect just like Progesterone provides. When you take L-Theanine for a month or longer, you will also notice it's calming effects extending throughout the day. You'll just say to yourself... "hummm... wow! I feel so much calmer these days!"

Many of you already know how valuable 5-HTP is for sleep (and mood too!). So I often recommend a low dose of 5-HTP before bed as well. 5-HTP is the precursor to Serotonin, which is the neurotransmitter that helps us sleep AND the "feel good" brain hormone. It is the neurotransmitter that is increased with anti-depressant medications!



SLEEP HEALTH



Young Hormones

<https://drkarenleggett.com/pages/young-hormones>

My website will guide you in choosing the right Young Hormones product for you.

<https://drkarenleggett.com/pages/choosing-and-using-the-right-product>

While visiting, make sure you bookmark the Free Hormone Library so you can view the videos at your leisure and discover everything you need to know about your hormones.

<https://drkarenleggett.com/pages/hormone-library>



DHEA/Progesterone - Progesterone - BiEst/Progesterone - Estriol/Progesterone
Natural Bioidentical Hormone Creams and Suppositories

*USP defined: The United States Pharmacopeial Convention, Incorporated, (USP) is a scientific nonprofit organization that sets standards for the identity, strength, quality, and purity of medicines, food ingredients, and dietary supplements. USP Grade means that a product meets all of the requirements as contained in the USP monograph for that product and is manufactured in a CGMP compliant facility. CGMP refers to the Current Good Manufacturing Practice regulations enforced by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA). CGMPs provide for systems that assure proper design, monitoring, and control of manufacturing processes and facilities. If there is no USP monograph, a material cannot be labeled as USP Grade.



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