

Melatonin (Dermatonin[®], Ferretonin[®], PrimeX[®], Regulin[®])

What It Is:

Melatonin is a hormone produced by the pineal gland in the brain from the amino acid tryptophan. Some foods contain extremely tiny amounts of melatonin. The melatonin in dietary supplements is generally manufactured synthetically or extracted from plants; however, it is chemically identical to the melatonin in your body.

What It Does:

- *For Trouble Falling Asleep and Anxiety.* Melatonin is known to play a role in regulating the body's natural wake-sleep cycle (circadian rhythm), triggering sleep. There is some evidence that melatonin may be helpful in reducing anxiety and aiding sedation before medical procedures. Its effects usually last a few hours. Melatonin can enhance effects of anti-anxiety drugs such as diazepam (Valium[®]), lorazepam (Ativan[®]), alprazolam (Xanax[®]) and similar drugs.
- *Skin Allergies.* Melatonin may be of some help to people with allergic dermatitis, characterized by itchy inflammation of the skin. It is unclear how melatonin may have modulated inflammation, as it did not affect measures of immune function.
- *Autoimmune blood disorders.* Melatonin is also used to treat immune mediated destruction of the red blood cells and/or platelets in dogs.
- *Alopecia X and Seasonal Flank Alopecia.* Some hair loss disorders which are presumed to be caused by hormonal imbalances can respond to treatment with melatonin. Melatonin promotes winter coat growth, and its absence contributes to spring shedding.
- Research has begun to suggest that melatonin may have a positive effect on the skeleton, improving bone density in those who suffer from osteoporosis.

Side Effects

Melatonin is usually well tolerated. Poor energy and sleepiness are the most frequently reported side effects. Melatonin should not be given to dogs and cats used for breeding, nor to kittens or puppies. Use with caution in animals with liver or kidney disease, or brain disorders. Melatonin implants injected under the skin can cause sterile abscess.

ConsumerLab Testing

Neither the FDA nor any other federal or state agency routinely tests supplements for quality prior to sale. Consequently, ConsumerLab.com tested melatonin products to determine if they contained listed amounts of melatonin and did not contain unacceptable levels of lead, a potential contaminant. Standard tablets and caplets were also tested to be sure that they would disintegrate ("break apart") properly. Products listed as "Approved" met their label claims and ConsumerLab.com's quality criteria.

Product Name	Claimed Amount of Melatonin per daily labeled serving	OVERALL RESULTS: APPROVED or NOT APPROVED	Contained Labeled Amount of Melatonin	Did Not Exceed Contamination Limit for Lead	Disintegrated Properly (NA=Not Applicable)
CVS/pharmacy® Melatonin	5 mg tablet	APPROVED	✓	✓	✓
Finest Nutrition [Walgreens] Melatonin - Cherry	3 mg tablet	APPROVED	✓	✓	✓
Finest Nutrition [Walgreens] Melatonin - Cherry	5 mg dissolvable tablet	APPROVED	✓	✓	✓
FoodScience® of Vermont Melatonin-3	3 mg capsule	APPROVED	✓	✓	NA
GNC Melatonin - Cherry	1 mg lozenge	APPROVED	✓	✓	NA
Herbatonin®	0.3 mg capsule	APPROVED	✓	✓	NA
Life Extension® Melatonin	3 mg capsule	APPROVED	✓	✓	NA
Natrol® Melatonin	5 mg tablet	APPROVED	✓	✓	NA
Nature's Bounty® Melatonin	10 mg capsule	APPROVED	✓	✓	NA
Nature Made® Melatonin	5 mg tablet	APPROVED	✓	✓	✓
NOW® Melatonin	10 mg capsule	APPROVED	✓	✓	NA
Pure Encapsulations® Melatonin Liquid	2.5 mg/ml	APPROVED	✓	✓	NA
Puritan's Pride® Melatonin Vitamin World® Melatonin	10 mg capsule	Similar to Nature's Bounty*	✓	✓	NA
Rexall® Melatonin	3 mg tablet	APPROVED	✓	✓	✓
Schiff® Melatonin Plus	3 mg tablet	APPROVED	✓	✓	✓
Solgar® Melatonin 10 mg	10 mg tablet	APPROVED	✓	✓	✓
Source Naturals® Melatonin	3 mg tablet	APPROVED	✓	✓	NA
Swanson® Melatonin**	3 mg capsule	APPROVED	✓	✓	NA
TwinLab® Melatonin Dots™ - All-Natural Wintergreen	3 mg dissolvable tablet	APPROVED	✓	✓	✓
USANA® Pure Rest™	2 mg tablet	APPROVED	✓	✓	✓
The Vitamin Shoppe® Melatonin	5 mg tablet	APPROVED	✓	✓	✓
Vitamin World® Melatonin	10 mg capsule	Similar to Nature's Bounty*	✓	✓	✓

* Product identical in formulation and manufacture to a product that has passed testing but sold under a different brand.

**Swanson® Melatonin is the least cost approved product

References:

ConsumerLab.com, LLC, 2015.

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Gimenez, F., et al. (2009). Suppression of estrus in cats with melatonin implants. *Theriogenology* **72**(4): 493-9.

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