

That's IT!

I've **had** it with my sleep problems! I don't usually have trouble falling asleep, but that's probably because I don't even start trying until midnight or later. Sometimes I do have trouble falling asleep, and even if I can fall asleep easily, I usually do not stay asleep all night. Not that I remember any of the several or many times I wake up each night; I'm usually in a stupor where I'll say things that don't make sense or say not-so-nice things to the dog or anyone else who happens to be in my way. The main problem is that I wake up in the morning feeling terribly under-rested, never ready to start the day, and the problem has been getting steadily worse in recent weeks. I rarely get headaches, but because of the stress of my horrible week compounded by the not sleeping, my head has been throbbing all week (the extremely loud live band at youth group did NOT help!). I've tried going to bed earlier, I've tried limiting my food and drink intake at night, I've tried taking naps when time allows (which is rare), and I've tried taking melatonin (an herb found naturally in the body that helps promote sleep), but nothing is helping. I just can't take it anymore; it's impossible to make my long busy days of caring for 4 small children enjoyable when I feel so tired all the time. My husband stayed awake for a little bit and listened to me sleep last night, and he said that there were times when I stopped breathing, which is a symptom of sleep apnea. So, as much as I hate to do it and don't even really have the time for it, I've made an appointment with the local sleep specialist who just happens to be our children's pediatrician. We'll see what he says next week, but chances are that I'll get sent over to the sleep center for a sleep study – YUCK. Just what I want to be: a lab rat; the subject of a study who has to find a way to fall asleep in a room with a bunch of people watching and while hooked up to all kinds of machines. This is just about one of the last things I want to do, but it

shows how incredibly desperate I am to finally get a good night's rest. If they can actually help me, feeling well-rested is going to be an amazing yet totally foreign feeling! If it doesn't help me, I'm back where I started but with one less option AND having missed out on a fun night with my family ☐

Dream Sequence...

My youngest daughter Disney has a cold, so lately, she's been waking up every hour (at least). So my sleep has been totally interrupted, which, for a person like me, is not good. I'm barely functioning. My body aches, my head pounds, I have no attention span, no patience with anybody, and I've been very grumpy – the fact that I'm admitting it says a lot :). It's been difficult for me to find joy in things lately, just because I'm so tired, and the thought of retiring to my bed at night now fills me with dread because of the 'night terrors' – waking to my daughter's screams and demands. Even if I don't wake up, I can still hear them in my sleep, and it's causing chaos in other aspects of my life. I'm barely even looking forward to this business trip we're taking this weekend to New Jersey. A few weeks ago, before this all started happening, I was ecstatic about this trip because it's right next to New York City and I've never been there. Not only that, but we're planning on stopping at TWO zoos on the way there, which as you might know, would normally put me over the moon with excitement. But now I'm just worried about getting there in one piece. My husband is the one who is actually crawling out of bed with our daughter; he is the slave to her every demand. So if I feel this bad, is he going to feel well enough to get us through the 10-hour drive and back safely? He assures me he is, but I don't know; I just feel SO crappy

all the time!

Anyway, to help try to regulate my sleep until this passes, I've been taking the diet supplement Melatonin. It's been providing me with some calm before I fall asleep; I used to lay there for about 30 minutes at least with a pounding heart and tense muscles before I could fall asleep, just waiting to hear my daughter's screams. But the Melatonin is helping me calm down a little bit, and hopefully it will make my bedroom feel less like a prison and more like the restful haven I was used to. One side effect of the Melatonin I've noticed is that it's given me VERY vivid dreams. The other night, I dreamt that my mom gave us these yogurt containers all stacked in rows that spelled out some sort of life advice. You know how they print stuff on product containers? Well, she had collected different flavors of yogurt that said different things and stacked them all up until they made a few sentences of wisdom. It was a gift for something; we got to read the advice and then keep all the yogurt. I wish I could remember the life advice they spelled out, but I don't. And after she gave us the gifts of yogurt, we found out that she and my friend Megan had been awarded shared custody of one of my daughter's friends whose parents were getting divorced and didn't want her anymore. *That* was random... but aren't dreams always that way? Here's to hoping our family's sleep can regulate in the near future. I'm taking Disney to the doctor on Thursday – I'm at the end of my rope. Luckily our pediatrician is also a sleep expert, so maybe he can help. I have so much going on right now that it would be SO great to be able to actually enjoy it!