

Preventing Prostate Cancer: Darkness

by Ann Gerhardt, MD

February 2011

We know much less about the relationship of prostate cancer with darkness and melatonin than we do for breast cancer.

Men with prostate cancer have lower melatonin levels than men without the disease. Melatonin blocks prostate cancer cell growth in test tube studies. It also reduces the effect of testosterone on prostate cell growth. I am not aware of studies linking darkness, sleep or shift work to prostate cancer.

Any supposition about using melatonin or getting more sleep in the dark to protect against prostate cancer would be conjecture at this time. There is no reason to think that there isn't a link, but very little data supports it so far.¶

Published by

**HEALTHY CHOICES FOR
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