

# Valerian

Valerian is a natural, plant-derived medicine which has been used for over 1,000 years. Its name means “Good Health.” Today, valerian is one of few natural products with scientific evidence to help sleep and anxiety. It may also improve OCD.

## How to Take It

- For anxiety and insomnia: 450-600 mg, take 1-2 hours before bedtime. Higher doses do not bring greater benefits.
- For OCD: 765 mg per day, divided into two doses.

Benefits for sleep, anxiety, and OCD build up over several weeks.

## Side Effects

Valerian is well-tolerated. Possible side effects include headache, stomach distress, and morning fatigue. Paradoxically, some people have anxiety on it. Valerian is not associated with addiction, tolerance, or withdrawal.

Some Valerian preparations have contaminants, and this is linked to rare reports of liver impairment and visual disturbance.

## Recommended Products

Some products have had issues with lead contamination or have not had the correct amount of valerian. The following passed tests by Consumer Labs:

Nature’s Way Standardized Valerian

GNC Herbal Plus Valerian



## Quick links to recommended products

[www.chrisaikenmd.com/supplements](http://www.chrisaikenmd.com/supplements)

Nature’s Way Standardized is no longer made, but the company makes similar versions (Nature’s Way Valerian Premium Extract, and Nature’s Way Valerian Nighttime, which also contains the sleep aid Lemon Balm).

**Bottom Line:** Try GNC’s Valerian, \$8-10/month on Amazon, take 1 capsule 1-2 hours before bedtime.

—Chris Aiken, MD, updated 7/28/2025