

Insomnia and sleep tips

Everyone has the occasional night of poor sleep. This can happen due to staying up too late or waking up too early. This does not mean you have insomnia, it means you did not get enough sleep.

Insomnia is the most common sleep complaint. It occurs when you have trouble falling asleep or staying asleep. With insomnia, you do not feel refreshed in the morning even though you had the opportunity to get a full night's sleep. Why some people have trouble sleeping varies, and includes:

- difficulty falling asleep
- difficulty staying asleep throughout the night
- waking up too early in the morning
- poor quality of sleep, or feeling tired in the morning

If you have insomnia, its effects can impact nearly every part of your life. You may notice that it can affect your work performance, mood and how you make decisions.

Types of insomnia

There are 2 types of insomnia based on how long you have it.

Acute Insomnia: Insomnia lasts for a short time — from several nights up to 3 weeks. It goes away on its own without treatment. It is more common than chronic insomnia.

Chronic Insomnia: Insomnia lasts for more than 3 weeks. This type of insomnia often needs some form of treatment to go away.

The reasons for insomnia vary from person to person and may be related to anxieties, worries, medical conditions and lifestyle. You may find that you can improve your sleep by making some adjustments to your lifestyle.

10 Sleep Tips

Make adjustments to your lifestyle by creating a routine at bedtime:

- **Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day.** Our bodies like routine! Get up at the same time each morning, no matter how much or how little sleep you get. Setting an alarm may help. Place a cover over the clock. It is hard to relax if you are watching the clock.
- **Do a relaxing activity about an hour before going to bed** such as taking a warm bath, listening to quiet music, stretching/yoga, deep breathing, reading a book or drinking warm milk. The secret is to find something that works to de-stress you before bed.
- **Make your bedroom dark, quiet, comfortable and cool.** Use a comfortable bed with a pillow that is right for you.
- **Go to bed only when you feel sleepy.** If you cannot fall asleep after 15 minutes, go to another room and do something relaxing like reading or listening to music.
- **Use your bedroom only for sleep and sex.** Turn off all Electronics. Unplug from all screens- TVs, computers, phones, iPads at least 30 minutes before bed.
- **Let your body be tired.** Do exercises as part of your every day routine. Finish exercising a few hours before bed so you are not up and energetic at bed time.
- **Avoid daytime napping longer than 20 minutes and after 3 p.m.**
- **Be mindful of when you eat.** Avoid large meals closer to bedtime.
- **Reduce alcohol, nicotine and caffeine use.** Avoid caffeine within 6 hours of bedtime; alcohol and smoking within 2 hours of bedtime.
- **Park your anxieties well in advance of going to bed.** You may find it helpful to have a worry period in the late afternoon or early evening. This may be the time to write down problems and possible solutions.

If you are still having trouble sleeping, please speak with your doctor. You may want to complete a sleep diary to help you and your doctor understand your sleep patterns.

To learn more about insomnia and getting a good night's sleep check online the National Sleep Foundation www.sleepfoundation.org