

Insomnia



University Services

Insomnia

Insomnia is the most common sleep problem among adults in the U.S. In recent National Sleep Foundation (NSF) polls, over 50% of Americans report experiencing insomnia symptoms a few nights a week or more. During times of stress, loss, or change insomnia can affect our sleep even more. Not only can insomnia itself cause discomfort and anxiety, but it can also have effects the next day such as causing problems with concentration, sleepiness, and even mood changes.

TYPE & DURATION	CAUSE
TRANSIENT A Few Nights a Week Fewer Than 4 Weeks	-Excitement, stress, anxiety -Health, work, or personal problem -A special or tragic event -Physical activity before bed -Illness
SHORT-TERM A Few Nights a Week 1-6 months	-Ongoing stress -Medical condition -Psychiatric illness.
CHRONIC Almost Every night Over 6 Months	-Depression -Medication -Poor health/sleep habits -Environmental Sleeping Conditions -Physical Condition

Symptoms

- Difficulty Falling Asleep
- Frequent Awakenings During the Night
- Waking too Early and Unable to Fall Back Asleep
- Waking Up Feeling Un-refreshed

Those at Risk

- Women
- Older Persons
- Those with a Medical Condition
- Those Who have Psychiatric Disorders
- Shift Workers

Talk About Your Sleep With Your Health Care Professional

Treatment & Management of Insomnia

Combines medication with improving health and sleep habits.

For acute or intermittent treatment of insomnia, sleep medications are more commonly prescribed.

- **Hypnotics** are prescription medications that promote and help maintain sleep. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has found them to be effective and safe. Recent studies have shown that hypnotic medications are most effective when used with behavioral treatments and healthy sleep practices.
- **Over-the-counter (OTC)** sleep promoting medications may include pain relievers or antihistamines; the latter are typically used for colds or allergies, but often have long-lasting sedating effects and have been shown to cause confusion and prolong hospitalization when used by older patients.

A combination of several behavioral treatment have been effective in treating insomnia.

- **Relaxation Training:** using techniques such as muscle relaxation, yoga, meditation, and breathing exercises to reduce tension and ease the transition into sleep.
- **Stimulus Control Therapy:** making it so your sleep environment is not stimulation and promotes sleep.
- **Cognitive Therapy:** learning to develop positive thoughts and beliefs about sleep.
- **Sleep Restriction:** following a program that limits time in bed in order to get to sleep and stay asleep.

Untreated Insomnia

Untreated Insomnia can lead to daytime sleepiness, mood impairment, difficulty with memory, poor performance, driving drowsy, accidents, illness, and an inability to enjoy life.

University Services provides a specialized treatment program for the diagnosis and treatment of insomnia. Our team is led by a Board Certified Physician Sleep Specialist.

Helpful Tips if You are Experiencing Insomnia

- Do not go to bed until you are sleepy.
- Use your bed for sleep and sex only.
- Get out of bed at the same time each morning.
- Limit your naps.
- After 15 minutes of being unable to sleep, get out of bed go to another room and do something relaxing.
- If you wake to early expose yourself to bright lights in the evening until you are ready for bed.
- If you are not getting enough sleep, restrict your time in bed to the hours you actually sleep; then gradually increase this time by going to bed earlier. Increase the time until you have good, continuous sleep during the night.

Good Health Habits that Promote Sleep

- Avoid caffeine and alcohol close to bedtime.
- Tobacco can endanger your health and should not be used.
- Exercise, but do so 3-6 hours before bedtime.
- Do not go to bed too full or too hungry.

Good Sleep Practices that Promote Sleep

- Maintain a regular sleep and wake time everyday, even weekends.
- Establish a regular bedtime routine. Try a relaxing activity before bed, avoid alerting or stressful activity.
- Keep your bedroom cool, dark, and quiet.
- Use a mattress and pillow that provides comfort.



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