

Treating Insomnia

If your doctor decides that you have insomnia, he may want to try other things before putting you on medication. Some things your doctor may want to try:

- ♦ Regular exercise
- ♦ Relaxation therapy
- ♦ Activities to help you change how you think about sleep and managing your thoughts or worries.

Sometimes there may be a medical reason causing your insomnia. Medications may be needed to help you sleep easier. Even if your doctor gives you medicine to help your insomnia, you should still use “good sleep habits” to get the best night’s sleep.

Warning!

DO NOT try to treat your insomnia with alcohol.

DO NOT use over-the-counter sleeping pills too often.

NEVER use someone else’s prescription medicine to help you sleep.

Educational material provided to Louisiana Medicaid recipients and providers by the Louisiana Medicaid Pharmacy Benefits Management Program (PBM) in the Department of Health and Hospitals and developed by the University of Louisiana at Monroe College of Pharmacy.

PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
BATON ROUGE, LA
PERMIT NO. 1037

UNISYS
PBM
P.O. Box 91024
Baton Rouge, LA 70821

COMPLETE WELLNESS:

A Guide to Managing Your Health



Insomnia

Series, R1-July 2008

By: Gregory W. Smith, PharmD, Michelle Massey, Publications Coordinator, and Larry Humble, PharmD, Office of Outcomes Research and Evaluation, The University of Louisiana at Monroe College of Pharmacy

Insomnia is common among adults. You may have insomnia if:

- ♦ You have a hard time falling asleep
- ♦ You wake up frequently during the night
- ♦ You have trouble waking up early

Sometimes insomnia only lasts a little while. This type of insomnia is easy to manage. But, if you have insomnia for a long time, it can affect your work, your relationship with family and friends, and your overall health.

How much sleep is enough?

Most healthy adults need 7 to 9 hours of sleep every night. Some people are okay with only 6 hours and other people may need up to 10 hours of sleep to feel completely rested.

Signs that you may not be getting enough sleep

Do you have trouble paying attention if something is boring?

Are you often irritable with coworkers, friends, or family for no reason at all?

Do you have a hard time concentrating or remembering things?

Why do I have insomnia?

There are many things that can cause insomnia, such as:



One way to find out what could be causing your insomnia is to keep a "sleep diary."

A sleep diary makes it easy to keep up with how sleepy you are during the day and compare it to how good you sleep at night. It can also help you figure out if something is causing your insomnia. Finding and fixing "bad sleep habits," and learning "good sleep habits" can help you control your insomnia. If you are able to get enough sleep, you will feel better and have a better quality of life.

Ask your doctor about a sleep diary, or go to <http://www.sleepfoundation.org> to download and print one.

Ask your doctor, pharmacist, or nurse about the information contained in this brochure.

"Good Sleep Habits"

Create a sleep routine.

Go to bed and get up at the same time every day, even on weekends. Your body will get used to the routine and it will be easier to fall asleep.

The bedroom is for sleeping.

If you use your bedroom for watching TV, reading, working, or eating, your body will think you are supposed to be awake when you are in bed.

Don't go to bed unless you are sleepy.

You can't force yourself to go to sleep. If you get in bed and don't fall asleep within 20 minutes, get out of bed and do something relaxing until you feel sleepy.

Relax and put your worries away.

Clear your mind and do something relaxing within an hour before bedtime. Things like taking a warm bath, reading, or listening to music will help you calm down and get ready for sleep. Do not use this time to think about your worries.

Avoid caffeine, alcohol & nicotine.

Try to avoid anything that contains caffeine, alcohol, or nicotine. Things like coffee, soft drinks, tea, and chocolate have caffeine in them and can keep you awake. Drinking alcohol may make you sleepy at first, but it often makes you wake up during the night and keeps you from resting well. Tobacco products can also keep you up at night.

Do not eat large meals late at night.

Going to bed right after eating a large meal can result in a long night of heartburn and restlessness.

Move the clock away from your bed.

Move your clock so you can't see it if you wake up during the night. Try to relax and go back to sleep without worrying about what time it is.

Make your bedroom comfortable.

Make your bedroom as cozy and comfortable as you can. Try to keep your bedroom at a comfortable temperature. It is important that your bedroom makes you feel relaxed.

Stay awake during the day.

If you don't sleep well at night, you may be tempted to take a nap the next day. Try not to nap during the day. Sleeping during the day tells your body that you should be awake when it is time to go to sleep at night.

Keep children in their own beds.

If you have young children who wake up during the night, feed or change them if needed, but put them back in their own beds to sleep. You may lose some rest trying to teach them to sleep alone, but it will be well worth it once you do.

Exercise, but not right before bed.

Exercise is very important, but it can keep you awake. If you have insomnia, do not exercise right before bedtime. Try to exercise around 5-6 hours before you go to bed. You may want to exercise in the morning or early afternoon.

Avoid things that keep you from falling asleep and staying asleep, such as:

- Loud noises
- Pets
- Bright light
- Outside traffic
- Television
- Other outside noises

Getting help for your insomnia

If you have tried the "good sleep habits" but still can't sleep, you should talk to your pharmacist or doctor.

Make an appointment with your doctor if you have trouble sleeping for more than 10 days. If you have been keeping a sleep diary, take it with you to your doctor's appointment.



Try these websites to learn more about insomnia:

<http://www.cdc.gov/sleep>

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/sleepdisorders.html>

<http://www.webmd.com/sleep-disorders/insomnia>

Remember, with the right help and habits you can put insomnia "to bed" and get a good night's sleep.

