

INSOMNIA

Insomnia is the perception or complaint of inadequate or poor-quality sleep because of one or more of the following:

- ✓ Difficulty falling asleep
- ✓ Waking up frequently during the night with difficulty returning to sleep
- ✓ Waking up too early in the morning
- ✓ Unrefreshing sleep

Insomnia can be classified as:

- ✓ Transient – short term – Lasting for a single night to a few weeks.
- ✓ Intermittent – on and off – Transient insomnia that occurs from time to time.
- ✓ Chronic – constant – Insomnia occurs on most nights, lasting a month or more.

Transient and intermittent insomnia may be caused by the following:

- ✓ Tension
- ✓ Anxiety
- ✓ Stress
- ✓ Environmental noise
- ✓ Extreme temperatures
- ✓ Change in the surrounding environment
- ✓ Sleep/wake schedule problems such as jet lag
- ✓ Medication side effects

The following behaviors also perpetuate insomnia in some people:

- ✓ Expecting to have difficulty sleeping and worrying about it
- ✓ Ingesting excessive amounts of caffeine
- ✓ Drinking alcohol before bedtime
- ✓ Smoking cigarettes before bedtime
- ✓ Excessive napping in the afternoon or evening
- ✓ Irregular sleep/wake schedules

The following suggestions may help:

- ✓ Keep reading this information maybe it will put you to sleep.
- ✓ Take a warm bath – use bath salts or Epsom salt and baking soda (one cup each).
- ✓ Get a massage – backrubs or face and scalp massages with slow, gentle strokes.
- ✓ Listen to music – soft, soothing music like rhythmic waves.
- ✓ Drink warm milk – 15 minutes before bed helps soothe the nervous system.
- ✓ Drink herb tea – hot chamomile, fennel, or anise tea all contain natural ingredients to help sleep.
- ✓ Eat a bedtime snack – a small, low protein, high carbohydrate snack like juice and cookies eaten about one hour before bed can help induce sleep or a food with large amounts of L-tryptophan like eggs, cottage cheese, warm or hot milk, turkey, or cashews may make you sleepy.

Insomnia suggestions continued:

- ✓ Avoid caffeine, alcohol, and tobacco – coffee, colas, black tea (not herbal), and chocolate all contain high amounts of caffeine. Alcohol and tobacco prevent a deep sleep so you don't feel rested.
- ✓ Sleep in a well-ventilated room – room temperature should be 60-65° for best sleeping conditions. Adjust the thermostat down and add more blankets.
- ✓ Sleep on your back – this allows your internal organs to rest. If you sleep on your side, sleep on the right side. Sleeping on your left side causes your lungs, stomach, and liver to press against your heart. No sleeping on your stomach, this causes pressure to all your internal organs, including lungs resulting in shallow breathing. It also causes stiff neck and upper back problems.
- ✓ Exercise during the day – even 15 minutes a day gives your body the activity and oxygen needed to relax.
- ✓ Keep regular bedtime hours – your body likes routine.
- ✓ If you can't sleep, get up – don't lie awake for more than 30 minutes, get up and do something non-stimulating and quiet until you get sleepy.
- ✓ Don't sleep in – get up at the same time every day, even weekends and holidays, don't break your routine. Don't lie in bed after you awake – get up.
- ✓ Get up earlier in the morning – try this for a short amount of time, it will make you more tired at night and you are apt to fall asleep faster. Return to your set schedule when the insomnia goes away .
- ✓ Avoid naps – at least while you are having trouble sleeping at night.
- ✓ See your doctor – if insomnia persists seek medical advice.

Chronic insomnia often results from a combination of factors, including physical or mental disorders. Seek medical assistance for diagnosis and treatment.