

# Talking About Your Treatment Options for Insomnia

## Insomnia Overview

Insomnia is a sleep disorder that can happen to most people at some point in their lifetime. It can happen at any age and may come and go. With insomnia, you may have trouble falling asleep (sleep onset), have trouble staying asleep (sleep maintenance), and/or wake up too early and be unable to fall back asleep.

Sometimes insomnia can be acute (short-term), lasting from 1 night to a few weeks. But when sleep problems happen at least 3 nights a week for 3 months or more, it's called chronic, or long-term, insomnia. Losing out on sleep can affect both your physical and mental well-being and your quality of life. In addition to sleep problems, insomnia can affect how you function during the day and your daily life with symptoms such as:

- Not waking up well rested
- Feeling tired or drained during the day
- Lower energy levels
- Feeling irritable, anxious, or depressed and worrying about sleep
- Being unhappy with your sleep quality or quantity (amount)
- Trouble paying attention, remembering, or concentrating
- Making mistakes more easily or having accidents



Insomnia can also cause complications (additional problems)

such as problems with work or school, being slower to react (including while driving or operating equipment), and a higher risk of getting or having more severe depression, heart disease, high blood pressure, or obesity.

## Ways to Help Manage Insomnia

Talking to your doctor and healthcare team about your sleep problems is important. They can help find the cause of your insomnia so you can make a treatment plan to help manage it and its symptoms. Ways they may recommend, alone or in combination, can include:

- Developing good “sleep hygiene” or good sleep habits
  - Lifestyle changes
  - Behavioral therapy
  - Medicines
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Depending on your symptoms and type of sleep problems, medicines your doctor may recommend can include:

- Benzodiazepine receptor agonists (BzRAs) that include benzodiazepines and non-benzodiazepine sedatives (sometimes called “z-drugs”)
- Dual-orexin receptor antagonists (DORAs)
- Histamine receptor antagonists
- Melatonin receptor agonists

All medicines can have side effects. Some that may happen with those to help manage insomnia can include sleepiness, drowsiness, fatigue (tiredness), dizziness, taste changes, nausea, diarrhea, headache, and infection. These are not all possible side effects -- be sure to ask your doctor or healthcare team member for a complete list.

## Treatment Is Not One-Size-Fits-All



When it comes to insomnia, what works for someone else may not be right for you. So what treatment, or combination of treatments, your doctor may recommend will depend on many factors, including the type of insomnia and your symptoms, your age and overall health, other health conditions you have and medicines you take, and your lifestyle and schedule. Ask your doctor about how to take your medicine and when, for how long, and about possible side effects. Certain medicines shouldn't be taken unless you're able to get a full 7 or 8 hours of sleep, and some should be taken within 30 minutes of going to bed.

Be sure to let your doctor know about your sleep problems, especially if they're interfering with your daily activities. Together, you can make a treatment plan to help manage insomnia and its symptoms and improve your quality of life.

### Questions you can ask your doctor and healthcare team can include:

- What may be causing my sleep problems?
- Is there treatment that can help improve my symptoms and quality of life?
- When, how, and for how long should I take treatment, and what are the possible side effects?
- How can I expect to feel when I wake up or the next day?
- What should I do if I feel stressed or depressed?