

Your Guide to Seeking Care for Insomnia

What Is Insomnia?

Insomnia is a sleep disorder where you can have trouble falling asleep, trouble staying asleep, and/or wake up too early and can't fall back asleep. Insomnia can happen to most people at some point and at any age. It may also come and go.

Many adults can experience acute (short-term) insomnia that typically lasts from 1 night to a few weeks. When sleep problems happen at least 3 nights a week for 3 months or more, it's known as chronic (long-term) insomnia. But insomnia isn't just about your sleep. It can greatly affect your quality of life and cause symptoms and complications (additional problems) that can affect your mental and physical well-being.

In addition to problems with sleep, insomnia can have symptoms such as:

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

Complications from insomnia can include problems at work or school, slower reactions (including while driving or operating equipment), and a higher risk of getting or having more severe heart disease, high blood pressure, obesity, or depression.

Help Is Available



Insomnia can greatly impact your quality of life, so let your doctor and healthcare team know if you're having sleep problems, especially if they're making it hard for you to do your daily activities. There are ways to help manage insomnia and its symptoms, so be open about all the ways that your sleep -- or lack of sleep -- is affecting you.

Your doctor can help find the cause of your sleep problems, and together you can make a treatment plan to help manage insomnia. If you have acute insomnia, you may not need treatment, but sometimes insomnia can last for years.

Making sure you get enough sleep is important for your body and brain -- losing out can affect both your physical and mental well-being.

Ways to Help Manage Insomnia

Different treatments for insomnia work for different people. The main goals of treatment will be to help improve your sleep quality and quantity and any problems you're having with your daytime functioning because of insomnia. Which treatment your doctor may recommend will depend on several 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.

Ways to help manage insomnia that they may recommend, alone or in combination, can include:

- Lifestyle changes and developing good sleep habits or “sleep hygiene”
- Behavioral therapy, sometimes called cognitive behavioral therapy for insomnia (CBT-I)
- Medicines such as benzodiazepine receptor agonists (BzRAs) that include benzodiazepines and non-benzodiazepine sedatives (sometimes called “z-drugs”), dual-orexin receptor antagonists (DORAs), histamine receptor antagonists, or melatonin receptor agonists. If your doctor recommends medicine, be sure to take it as directed and ask them about when to take it, for how long, and any possible side effects that may happen



Keeping a sleep diary can be helpful for when you talk to your doctor. You can track or record your symptoms, sleep patterns, how your sleep problems are affecting you, and how you feel during the day.

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

- What may be causing my sleep problems?
- Are there any lifestyle changes I should make?
- How can I develop good sleep habits/sleep hygiene?
- Is there treatment that can help improve my symptoms and my quality of life?
- What medicines are available, and what are their side effects?