

# can't sleep?

## the truth about insomnia

Insomnia is the most common sleep complaint among Americans. It can be acute, lasting from one to several nights, or chronic, spanning months and even years. Commonly used to describe the inability to fall asleep and remain asleep, "insomnia" also refers to not feeling refreshed upon awakening.

### Symptoms of insomnia include:

- Difficulty falling asleep
- Waking up often during the night
- Difficulty returning to sleep
- Waking up too early in the morning
- Daytime sleepiness
- Difficulty concentrating
- Irritability

If you have a hard time sleeping, it is essential to determine if an underlying disease or condition is causing the problem. Sometimes insomnia is caused by pain, digestive problems or a sleep disorder. Insomnia may trigger depression or anxiety. In addition, some medications can contribute to insomnia including those taken for:

- Colds and allergies
- High blood pressure
- Heart disease
- Thyroid disease
- Birth control
- Asthma
- Pain medications
- Depression

**Insomnia:**  
the inability  
to fall asleep  
or remain  
asleep.



## Getting treatment

It's important to talk with your doctor before starting any treatment. Provide your doctor with the right information. Keep a diary of your daily routine, your health, any medication you're taking, and your sleep schedule and patterns. Depending on your diagnosis, various treatment options may be recommended.

These could include:

- Behavioral therapy
- Relaxation techniques
- Medication
- Practicing good sleep hygiene
- Daily exercise

## Coping with insomnia

Regardless of what's causing your sleep problems, it is important to establish and maintain a nutritious diet, good health and sleep-promoting routines on a daily basis. Making simple changes can make a difference.

### At night:

- Do not eat or drink close to bedtime
- Create a sleep-promoting environment that is dark, cool and comfortable
- Avoid disturbing noises – consider a bedside fan or white noise machine to help mask other sounds

### During the day:

- Consume less or no caffeine
- Avoid alcohol and nicotine
- Exercise, but not within three hours of your bedtime
- Keep a diary of your daily health status, routine and sleep patterns to share with your doctor



Source: National Sleep Foundation



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