

Insomnia

Insomnia is trouble falling asleep or waking up too early and feeling tired or sleepy.

Sleep needs change with age. Young people need about 8 hours of sleep. For the elderly, 6 hours is enough, they sleep more lightly and they awaken and get up more often during the night.

Some people need only a few hours of sleep. Sleep disturbances are common during pregnancy, menopause or when you have personal problems.

What can I do to sleep better? Go to bed and get up at the same time every day.

Get half an hour or so of light exercise every day (walk, swim, cycle, etc.). Don't nap. If you really must, limit your nap to no longer than 30 minutes.

Try to reduce stress: take some time every day to think and plan, without distractions, knowing how to prioritize; live in the present; build healthy relationships in every area of your life.

Avoid smoking, alcohol and caffeine (found in coffee, tea, soft drinks, chocolate) and taking medications that may disrupt sleep, in the afternoon and in the evening. At the end of the day avoid activities that cause stress, don't watch too much television or fall asleep with the TV on. Eat a light supper two hours before bedtime. Don't go to bed hungry.

You may drink a glass of warm milk or chamomile or linden-flower tea. Establish a bedtime routine such as listening to soothing music, giving yourself a massage or meditating for a few minutes, taking a hot bath, brushing your teeth, reading, etc. Sleeping pills are only useful for a short time and their effects can linger into the next day. If you use them, avoid driving or performing dangerous tasks. When used long-term, they can be harmful.

Your bedroom should be quiet, dark and have a comfortable temperature (about 18°C or 65°F). You should only use it for sleep and sex. It is not a place for working, reading, watching TV, using the phone, etc. If you follow this advice, your bedroom environment will be conducive to sleep.



To stop thinking about your worries, write them down. Don't focus on not being able to sleep. Although it has not been proven, turning off your cell phone and WiFi router can help you sleep better.

Go to bed when you feel sleepy. If you haven't fallen asleep after about 15 minutes, get up and go into another room and do something relaxing. Go back to bed when you feel sleepy again. Do this as many times as necessary. Don't worry if you can't sleep.

