



## Health Yourself Byte

### INSOMNIA



Did you know . . .

1. People today sleep 20% less than they did 100 years ago.
2. More than 30% of the population suffers from insomnia.
3. One in three people suffer from some form of insomnia during their lifetime.
4. More than half of Americans lose sleep due to stress and/or anxiety.
5. Between 40% and 60% of people over the age of 60 suffer from insomnia.
6. Women are up to twice as likely to suffer from insomnia as men.
7. Approximately 10 million people in the U.S. use prescription sleep aids.

Insomnia can mean several different things: trouble falling asleep, waking up during the night and having difficulty falling back to sleep, or waking up too early. Short-term insomnia, lasting a few nights to a few weeks, is usually caused by worry. Long-term insomnia, which can last an indefinite period of time, is often caused by anxiety, chronic pain, depression, frequent urination, respiratory problems, or other physical disorders.

**Since May is Better Sleep Month, here are a few self-care measures:**

- Avoid alcohol in the evening. Alcohol has a short-term sedative affect. Alcohol interferes with a deep sleep and you may not feel rested in the morning.
- Avoid or reduce caffeine. Caffeine acts as a stimulant and can stay in your system 12-24 hours. Common sources of caffeine are coffee, tea, many sodas, and chocolate.
- Medications may affect your sleep. Many over-the-counter decongestants can act as a stimulant. Be sure to ask your doctor or pharmacist if one of your medicines can cause problems with sleeping.
- Take a warm bath 1-2 hours before bedtime.
- Exercise regularly. It will help to tire you out, so you can sleep more soundly. Avoid strenuous activity several hours before going to bed. Exercise can be stimulating and may interfere with your falling asleep.
- Avoid long afternoon naps.
- Make your bedroom comfortable: have a comfortable mattress, eliminate or mask environmental noise (an example would be using a fan), have the room dark, and avoid sleeping in a warm room.
- Stick to a routine. Our body's internal clock responds best to a regular schedule.

**When to call your doctor:**

- If you suspect medications are causing your sleep problems.
- If you are excessively sleepy during the day.
- If self-care measures don't help after a month.
- If you feel you are depressed, discuss your symptoms with your doctor.
- If you are having frequent hot flashes/night sweats due to menopause and they are interfering with a restful sleep.



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