

What to Know About Insomnia Disorder

Everyone can have problems with their sleep once in a while.
But what happens when once in a while turns into something more?

What Is Insomnia Disorder?

Insomnia is a common sleep disorder that can happen to most people at some point in their life. With insomnia, you may have trouble falling asleep, have trouble staying asleep, or wake up too early and not be able to fall back asleep. Many adults can experience short-term insomnia, often because of an upsetting or stressful life event, and insomnia may come and go. But when you have sleep problems at least 3 nights a week for 3 months or more, you could have a condition called insomnia disorder.

Insomnia Disorder Symptoms

Insomnia disorder is a chronic, or long-term, condition. It can greatly affect your quality of life, including your energy level and daily activities, mood and behavior, relationships, and even your physical health. People who have insomnia disorder feel dissatisfied or unhappy about how good their sleep is (quality) and/or how much sleep they get (quantity), as well as have symptoms such as:

- Feeling tired or sleepy during the day or irritable, anxious, or depressed
- Worrying about not being able to sleep
- Not waking up refreshed or well-rested
- Trouble paying attention, remembering, or concentrating
- Making mistakes more easily or having accidents



Your Sleep Matters

Getting enough sleep is important for your body and your brain. Most adults need around 7 to 8 hours a night. Some people can get less sleep than normal and it may not bother them. But when you have insomnia disorder, it can affect how you function during the daytime and your daily life. Losing out on sleep can affect both your physical and mental well-being.

Complications (additional problems) that can happen with insomnia disorder can include:

- Problems doing well at work or school
 - Being slower to react, including while driving or operating equipment
 - A higher risk of getting or having more severe high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity, or depression
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Managing Insomnia Disorder

If you have short-term insomnia, you may not need treatment. But if your sleep problems are affecting your quality of life and making it hard for you to do your daily activities, talk to your doctor so you can be checked for insomnia disorder.

Developing good sleep habits -- or sleep hygiene -- is the first step to managing insomnia. Your doctor may also recommend treatments such as behavioral therapy and medicines.

Ways to have good sleep hygiene and encourage better sleep include:

- Keep a regular schedule by going to bed at the same time each night and getting up at the same time each morning
- Create a routine to follow before bed each night
- Avoid naps during the day
- Limit screen time and don't use phones, e-books, or computers before bed
- Avoid caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol in the evening
- Don't eat big meals late in the day or drink liquids before bedtime
- Exercise at least 3 to 4 hours or earlier before your bedtime
- Make your bedroom dark, quiet, and the right temperature for sleep
- Relax before bedtime by reading, listening to music, meditating, doing yoga or breathing exercises, or taking a warm bath or shower
- Use your bed for sleep and sex only -- don't watch TV or do work while in bed
- If you can't fall asleep, get up and do something calming or relaxing in another room
- Don't go to bed too early or before you're sleepy, and get out of bed once you feel rested -- don't stay in bed if you're not sleeping

