

Is Insomnia Affecting How You Function During the Day?

Insomnia Disorder

Everyone can have sleep problems once in a while, and many adults can experience short-term insomnia, often because of stressful life events. 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. But when sleep problems happen at least 3 nights a week for 3 months or more, you could have a chronic (long-term) condition called insomnia disorder.

In addition to problems with sleep, insomnia disorder can affect how you function during the day and your daily life with symptoms such as:

- Feeling dissatisfied or unhappy about how good your sleep is (quality) and/or how much sleep you get (quantity)
- Not waking up refreshed or well-rested
- Lower energy levels
- Being tired or sleepy during the day
- Feeling irritable, anxious, or depressed and worrying about sleep
- Trouble paying attention, remembering, or concentrating
- Making mistakes more easily or having accidents



Insomnia disorder can greatly affect your mood and behavior, relationships, and even your physical health, including having a higher risk of getting or having more severe high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity, or depression.

Talking to Your Doctor About Insomnia Disorder

Let your doctor know if you're having sleep problems, especially if they're affecting your quality of life and making it hard for you to do your daily activities. Be sure to be honest about all the ways that your sleep is affecting you -- open communication is the first step to getting properly diagnosed and treated for insomnia disorder.

Keeping a sleep diary can be especially helpful for when you talk to your doctor. It can help you track or record your symptoms, sleep patterns, how your sleep problems are affecting you, and how you feel during the day. You can also ask your sleep partner and others in your household about the quality and quantity of your sleep.

To help you when you talk to your doctor, keep a record of:

- What time you go to sleep every night
- Which nights you have problems with your sleep and what kind, such as trouble falling asleep or staying asleep
- What time you wake up every day
- How long you sleep for
- How you feel when you wake up -- are you refreshed or still tired? -- and your mood
- What days you're not able to do daily activities as well as you usually do, if you need to cancel any activities, and if you have problems at work or school



There are ways to help manage insomnia disorder. Your doctor may recommend treatments such as behavioral therapy and medicines. But developing good sleep habits -- or sleep hygiene -- is the first step to managing insomnia disorder. Ways to have good sleep hygiene and encourage better sleep can include going to bed at the same time and getting up at the same time each day, avoiding naps, limiting screen time before bed, and avoiding caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol in the evening. Talk to your doctor about all the ways you can improve your sleep.

Questions you can ask your doctor about your sleep can include:

What may be causing my sleep problems?

Could I have insomnia disorder?

Are there any lifestyle changes I should make?

How can I develop good sleep habits/good sleep hygiene?

What treatment are available and what are their side effects?