

# What You Need Know About Obstructive Sleep Apnea and Insomnia

Both obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) and insomnia can disrupt your sleep and affect how well you function during the day. And while they may have some similar symptoms, OSA and insomnia are 2 different conditions and may be treated differently.

## What Is Obstructive Sleep Apnea?

Obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) -- sometimes called sleep apnea -- is a health condition where something blocks your upper airway during your sleep and interferes with your breathing. Many people will wake up briefly several times a night so their body can reopen their airway, but then not remember waking up. So with OSA, you may not be sleeping well, but you also may not know exactly why.



Anyone can have OSA at any age, but you may be more likely to have it if you are obese or overweight, male, an older adult, a smoker, or have asthma, diabetes, high blood pressure, a higher risk of heart failure or stroke, or a family history of OSA.

## OSA Symptoms

With OSA, you may have nights or times of sleep where you:

- Snore loudly or frequently
- Feel like you're gasping, coughing, or choking
- Wake up suddenly
- Are restless or have trouble staying asleep
- Have night sweats

Common OSA symptoms when waking up or during the day can include:

- Trouble waking up
- A dry mouth, sore throat, or headache upon waking
- Sleepiness or fatigue (tiredness)
- Trouble concentrating, forgetfulness, depression, or crankiness

## What Is Insomnia?

OSA is not the only condition that can affect your sleep. Insomnia can happen to most people at some point in their life and be acute (short term) lasting from 1 night to up to a few weeks, or chronic (long term). Many adults can experience acute insomnia, often because of an upsetting or traumatic event. But when sleep problems happen at least 3 nights a week for 3 months or more, it's chronic insomnia.

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Insomnia may not always have an exact cause, but when it does, it can vary from person to person and include:

- Stress
- Your sleep environment (noise, light, or temperature)
- Changes in your sleep schedule
- Genetics (traits you inherit from your parents)
- A medicine or substance such as alcohol, caffeine, or tobacco
- A health condition such as pregnancy, heartburn, pain, arthritis, depression, asthma, or cancer

## Insomnia Symptoms

With insomnia, you may have trouble falling asleep or staying asleep, or wake up too early and not be able to fall back asleep. You may often feel dissatisfied or unhappy about how good your sleep is (quality) and/or how much sleep you get (quantity).

Insomnia can also cause symptoms such as:

- Feeling tired or drained during the day
- Not waking up well rested
- Having trouble paying attention, remembering, or concentrating
- Making mistakes more easily or having accidents
- Feeling irritable, anxious, or depressed
- Worrying about sleep



## Talking to Your Doctor About Your Sleep Loss

If your sleep problems are affecting your quality of life, talk to your doctor. Getting enough sleep is important for your body and your brain -- most adults need around 7 to 8 hours a night. Losing out on sleep can affect both your physical and mental well-being.

Your doctor will try to find what may be causing your sleep loss and if treatment may be recommended. And while insomnia and OSA are 2 separate conditions, you can have both at the same time. So talking to your doctor is the first step to getting the care you need to protect your health and get a good night's sleep.

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

What may be causing my sleep problems?

Are there any lifestyle changes I should make?

How can I develop good sleep habits?

What treatments are available for OSA and/or insomnia, and what are their side effects?