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Do you:

- *Lie in bed, tossing and turning, for hours a night?*
- *Wake up during the night and find that you can't go back to sleep?*
- *Dread going to bed because you feel like you never get a good night's sleep?*

If you answered "yes" to any of the above questions, you may have insomnia.

Insomnia is a sleep disorder that happens when you have trouble falling asleep or staying asleep.

Who is at risk for insomnia?

Anyone may have insomnia, but it is more common in some groups, such as:

- Older adults
- Women
- People under stress
- People with certain medical and mental problems

Studies show that Insomnia negatively affects work performance.

What causes insomnia?

Some sleep disorders can cause insomnia or make it worse.

Obstructive sleep apnea, or OSA, is a common sleep disorder which results in partial or complete airway collapse while you are sleeping. When your airway collapses, air can't get through and you often wake up. Many times, you don't remember waking up and falling back asleep. However, you may wake up and be unable to fall back asleep. Some people with OSA also have trouble falling asleep at night.

Restless Legs Syndrome, or RLS, happens when you feel like you have to move your legs. You may also feel burning or itching inside your legs. RLS can make it difficult for you to fall asleep. Consequently, you may be sleepy or tired the next day.

Speak with your physician if you think you may have symptoms of OSA or RLS. Insomnia often improves when these sleep disorders are treated.

Other medical problems can also cause insomnia or make it worse.

Depression is one of the most common mental illnesses in America. People with depression often have trouble falling asleep or staying asleep. Signs of depression include:

- Lack of interest in or not enjoying activities that usually make you happy
- Feeling like you have no energy and are worn out

Pain – people who experience chronic pain from another medical problem, like arthritis or cancer, can have trouble sleeping.

How is Insomnia Treated?

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia, or CBT-I is a non-medication treatment for insomnia. CBT-I addresses the thoughts and behaviors that keep you from sleeping well and helps you to learn new strategies to sleep better. CBT-I can include techniques for:

- Stress reduction
- Relaxation
- Sleep schedule management

Many people combine medication and CBT-I. Although insomnia is common, most people can find a treatment that works for them.

Improving Sleep Hygiene: Good sleep hygiene can play an important role in the reduction and elimination of insomnia. The following are a number of sleep hygiene tips that may help you overcome insomnia.

1. Wait until you are sleepy before going to bed. If you're not sleepy at your regular bedtime, try to relax your body and distract your mind by reading or listening to music.
2. Pre-sleep rituals help to initiate relaxation at night before bed. A warm bath, light snack, or a few minutes of reading or music will relax you enough to make you sleepy. Avoid eating heavy meals near bedtime.
3. If you're not asleep in 20 minutes, get out of the bed. If you're not sleepy after 20 minutes, leave your bedroom and find something else that will relax you enough to help make you sleepy.
4. Try to keep a regular sleep/wake schedule. Wake up at the same time each day, even on weekends and holidays

5. Keep a regular daily schedule for meals, medications, chores, and other activities. This will help keep your body's clock running smoothly.
6. If possible, avoid naps. If you have to take a nap, try to keep it to less than one hour and avoid taking a nap after 3:00 p.m.
7. Do not read, eat, watch television, talk on the phone, or play board or computer games in bed.
8. Avoid caffeine after lunch.
9. Avoid alcohol of any type within 6 hours of your bedtime.
10. Do not smoke or ingest nicotine within 2 hours of your bedtime.
11. Exercise regularly, but avoid strenuous exercise within 6 hours of your bedtime.
12. Also remember to talk to your doctor before starting an exercise program.
13. Avoid sleeping pills, or use them cautiously. Always use sleeping pills only as prescribed and directed by your physician.
14. Try to clear your mind of things that make you worry. Find ways to relieve stress and aggravation before you go to sleep. The bed is your place to rest, not a place to worry about the day's problems.
15. Maintain a quiet, dark and cool bedroom environment. Extreme heat or cold should be avoided. If you need noise, use white noise or soft music. If you need light, use soft-light such as a night light in the bathroom or hall.
16. Don't be a nighttime clock watcher. Staring at a clock in your bedroom while trying to fall asleep or to go back to sleep can actually increase stress, making it harder to fall asleep.

Medication can be used to treat insomnia. Prescription or over-the-counter medication can help you fall or stay asleep. Speak to your physician about any sleeping pills you have been prescribed or purchased over the counter. Modern sleeping pills provide safe and effective treatment for insomnia. However, many sleeping pills are not meant to be used long term and might have negative side effects. Your physician can help you if you want to safely stop using a sleeping pill.

If your symptoms don't go away after trying these tips, your physician can help you find the treatment that is right for you.