"The way you feel in the daytime is a consequence of how well you are sleeping at night."

William C. Dement, MD, PhD
Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences
Director, Stanford University Sleep Disorders Clinic and Research Center
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It is normal to have trouble sleeping now and then. Over time, though, getting too little sleep can lead to serious problems. For example, it can become hard to stay alert during the day. Work performance can suffer.

If you have trouble falling asleep or staying asleep, it could be a medical condition called insomnia.

There is a lot you can do to help improve your sleep. This video and guidebook program may help you:

- Understand insomnia and its causes
- Find ways to sleep better
- Work with your doctor and explore treatment choices

“If you get the sleep you need, you just feel better the next day, and you are able to function in a far greater way.”

Finola Hughes
What Is Insomnia?

Insomnia is a medical condition. If a person experiences any of the following, it could be insomnia:

- Difficulty falling asleep
- Difficulty staying asleep (trouble returning to sleep after awakening)
- Waking up too early
- Poor quality of sleep (not feeling refreshed after sleep)

Sometimes insomnia occurs with another medical, psychiatric, or psychological condition. Sometimes it does not. Simply changing your lifestyle or sleeping environment might do a lot to help improve your sleep.

Insomnia can be:

- Acute – lasts for less than a month
- Intermittent – comes and goes
- Chronic – continues for a month or longer

Risk Factors

Anyone can get insomnia, but some people are at higher risk than others. Possible risk factors include:

- **Age.** Some studies suggest that the risk of insomnia increases with age. The risk might begin to increase around age 45.
- **Gender.** Women seem to have insomnia more often than men, especially after menopause.
- **Health.** Poor physical or mental health can raise a person’s risk. For example, depression can raise the risk of insomnia.

“No matter how serious your insomnia is, it is treatable.”

William C. Dement, MD, PhD

Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences

Director, Stanford University Sleep Disorders Clinic and Research Center
What Causes Insomnia?

From lifestyle factors to health conditions, there are many possible causes of insomnia.

Sometimes a person’s sleep environment makes sleep more difficult. The bedroom might be too noisy, too hot, or too cold. Too much light in the room can also interfere with sleep.

Having a nighttime job or routinely doing activities at night can lead to insomnia. Irregular sleep/wake habits or sudden changes in sleep schedule can also produce sleep problems. For example, it might become harder to sleep after a long plane flight or when changing to a different work shift. Even if you follow a regular sleep schedule, sleeping too much during the day can affect nighttime sleep.

The caffeine in coffee, tea, chocolate, and caffeinated sodas can make it harder to sleep. Did you know that drinking alcohol can also lead to insomnia? Smoking can contribute to insomnia, too.

Another cause is stress. Insomnia may result from chronic stress—feeling too much stress over a long period. Or, it may be related to a single stressful event, such as losing a job, the death of a loved one, divorce, or other major life change.

Watching the clock at night can be stressful. If you expect to have trouble sleeping and worry about it, that can contribute to insomnia, too.

Health-Related Causes

Many different medical conditions can cause insomnia. Some examples are:

- Allergies
- Arthritis
- Asthma
- COPD (bronchitis/emphysema)
- Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD)
- Heart failure
- Kidney disease
- Parkinson’s disease
- Thyroid disease
- Pain from a physical injury

Insomnia can also be a side effect from certain medications. Ask your healthcare professional about the side effects of any medications you take.

Psychological or psychiatric conditions can also cause insomnia. For example, depression can be a cause.

Some people with insomnia symptoms have an underlying sleep disorder. Disorders such as sleep apnea, narcolepsy, and restless legs syndrome can involve insomnia.
Tips for Sleeping Better

Whether you have chronic, intermittent, or short-term insomnia, there are many things you can do to help get a more restful sleep.

Maintain a quiet, relaxing bedroom atmosphere. If you plan to watch an action-packed movie, view it in another room. If you and your spouse are having an argument, talk outside the bedroom. Try to avoid using your bed for activities other than sleep or sex. Make sure you have a comfortable mattress and pillow, and do not allow too much light or noise in the room.

Follow a regular sleep schedule. Go to bed at your regular time, even if you were awake too much the night before. Try to spend no more than 8 hours in bed each night.

Establish a relaxing bedtime routine. You might enjoy taking a warm bath, reading a good book, or listening to relaxing music before bed. If it is hard to go to sleep or stay asleep, try the following:

- If you are still awake after about 25 minutes in bed, leave the bedroom and engage in a relaxing activity until tired before returning to bed.
- Avoid clock-watching during the night.
- If you wake up in the middle of the night, picture something that may help relax you. For example, imagine walking on the beach. If you don’t fall back to sleep within about 25 minutes, get up and do something relaxing in another room. You might want to read or listen to music.

Sleep Basics

According to sleep experts, most adults need 7 to 8 hours of sleep each night to perform their best during the day. Children and teenagers need even more sleep.

During a normal night’s sleep, a person goes through about 4 or 5 sleep cycles. Each cycle lasts about 90 minutes and includes two main types of sleep: REM (rapid eye movement) sleep and non-REM sleep. Dreaming usually takes place during REM sleep.

Sleeping too little can have serious consequences. It might lead to daytime fatigue, trouble concentrating, bad moods, poor work performance, depression, or other problems. Not getting enough sleep can also affect a person’s coordination, memory, and thinking skills.

“The idea is to use the bedroom as a sanctuary for restorative sleep, rather than a place where you ruminate about all the things that worry you.”

Andrew O. Jamieson, MD
Clinical Assistant Professor, Department of Psychiatry,
University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center
Be physically active. Plan to complete your workout in the late afternoon or earlier. Do not exercise within 2 or 3 hours of bedtime.

Try to spend part of the day outdoors. Walking is a great way to be physically active outdoors. Gardening or taking children to the playground can also be very enjoyable. Going to a baseball game or other sporting event is less physically active, but it does get you outdoors.

Try relaxation techniques. Many yoga, tai chi, and meditation techniques can help a person relax.

Limit caffeine and alcohol. Avoid coffee, tea, chocolate, and caffeinated sodas late in the day. Do not use alcohol to fall asleep. It may help you fall asleep faster, but research shows that drinking alcohol results in poorer quality of sleep and waking up at night.

Eat healthy, balanced meals. Don’t eat or drink too much before bedtime. Some people might find it helpful to drink a little milk or noncaffeinated tea before bed.

Do not smoke. Smoking is bad for your overall health and also bad for your sleep. Talk with your healthcare professional if you need help quitting.

Working with Your Doctor

When sleep problems persist, see your doctor. Tell your doctor if you experience any of the symptoms of insomnia:

- Difficulty falling asleep
- Difficulty staying asleep (trouble returning to sleep after awakening)
- Waking up too early
- Not feeling refreshed after sleep

Other symptoms may indicate insomnia or another condition that involves sleep loss. Tell your doctor if one or more of these symptoms apply to you:

- Often feel sleepy during the day
- Have trouble concentrating or paying attention
- Fall asleep at unusual times.

Complete the seven-day sleep diary at the back of this book. Then, take it to your next appointment and share it with your doctor.
What to Expect

To help evaluate sleep problems, the doctor may ask about your medical history and do a physical exam.

Expect the doctor to:

- **Evaluate your condition.** It might be insomnia, or it might be another condition.

- **Treat any underlying conditions.** For example, if asthma is contributing to your insomnia, it is important to make sure you are getting the right asthma treatment.

- **Recommend appropriate treatment for your condition.**

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Treatment Options

Treatment for insomnia may be as simple as identifying and changing your sleep habits. For example, following a regular sleep schedule can be very helpful.

Depending on your condition, the doctor might also recommend cognitive behavioral therapy, prescription medication, or both.

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**Sleep Centers**

If the doctor thinks you might have a disorder such as sleep apnea or narcolepsy, you might be referred to a sleep center for an overnight sleep study and other special tests.

At a sleep center, a technician connects various wires to help monitor your sleep and eye muscle movements. A camera watches you sleep. It does not hurt, and most people say it does not disrupt their sleep.

“*We try to let insomnia patients know how important it is to maintain a regular sleep schedule.*”

Andrew O. Jamieson, MD
Clinical Assistant Professor, Department of Psychiatry, University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center
Cognitive and Behavioral Therapies

Cognitive and behavioral therapies can help to improve your sleep habits and establish a regular sleep routine. These therapies can also help change your views of sleep and sleep loss to help provide a more restful sleep.

Cognitive and behavioral therapies usually involve several visits to a therapist. The therapist may be a psychologist, a psychiatrist, another healthcare professional, or a counselor with specialized training.

**Cognitive therapy** aims to help you learn how certain thinking patterns are affecting you.

**Behavioral therapy** aims to change how you react to troublesome situations. It can help you “take it easy” and relax about things.

**Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT)** combines cognitive and behavioral therapy. It might be more effective than either type alone. Your doctor might recommend CBT before considering use of prescription medication for insomnia.

CBT may help you recognize the thinking behind feelings and behaviors that you want to change. It may help you learn to think about things in ways that lead to more desirable reactions.

CBT can also help you discover how much sleep you need and understand how your sleep needs change as you get older. It may help ease your worries about insomnia.

Medication

Talk with your doctor about treatment options. Your doctor can advise you about whether prescription medication might be helpful for you.

If your doctor prescribes medication, ask the following questions:

- **What is it for?**
- **How should I take it?**
- **What should I expect from it?**
- **What are the most common side effects?**
- **How long should I take it?**
- **When should I come back for my next appointment?**

There are several different types of medication for insomnia. No single type is best for everyone. Work with your healthcare professional to help find the type that works best for you.
Sleep Diary

It can be useful to have a written record of your sleep patterns. Use the following Sleep Diary to record information about your sleep over a one-week period. Answer each question for seven days.

Sleep Diary, Part 1:

**Morning Questions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer these questions each morning:</th>
<th>Day 1</th>
<th>Day 2</th>
<th>Day 3</th>
<th>Day 4</th>
<th>Day 5</th>
<th>Day 6</th>
<th>Day 7</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At what time did you go to bed last night?</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>About how long did it take to fall asleep?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you awaken during the night?</td>
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<td>If so, how many times?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>About how many hours did you sleep?</td>
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<tr>
<td>At what time did you wake up (for the last time) in the morning?</td>
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<tr>
<td>When you woke up, did you feel?</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 = Very refreshed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 = Somewhat refreshed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 = Fatigued</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sleep Diary, Part 2:

**Evening Questions**

Answer these questions each evening:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Day 1</th>
<th>Day 2</th>
<th>Day 3</th>
<th>Day 4</th>
<th>Day 5</th>
<th>Day 6</th>
<th>Day 7</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How much time, if any, did you spend napping during the day?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Did you consume any caffeine (including chocolate) within 6 hours of bedtime?</td>
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<td>Did you drink any alcohol within 1 hour of bedtime?</td>
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<tr>
<td>On a scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate your energy level during this day?</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 = Energetic</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 = Tired or weary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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For more information about sleep and insomnia, contact the following organizations or find them on the Internet.

**American College of Physicians**
Philadelphia, PA 19006
Doctors for Adults
www.doctorsforadults.com

**National Sleep Foundation (NSF)**
1522 K Street, NW
Suite 500
Washington, DC 20005
202-347-3471
www.sleepfoundation.org

**National Institutes of Health (NIH):**

**National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute**
Health Information Center
P.O. Box 30105
Bethesda, MD 20824
301-592-8573

**National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke**
*Sleep Basics: Understanding Sleep* (NIH Publication No. 06-3440-c)
www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/brain Basics/understanding_sleep.htm

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For more information about internal medicine physicians, please visit: www.doctorsforadults.com.
Credits

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This video and guidebook program may help you:
- Understand insomnia and its causes
- Find ways to sleep better
- Work with your doctor and explore treatment choices

In the video, you will be inspired by Finola Hughes, a mom, daytime drama star, and fashion TV show host with firsthand knowledge of the effects of insomnia. You will also get advice from sleep experts William C. Dement, MD, PhD, Andrew O. Jamieson, MD, and Gary K. Zammit, PhD. In the guidebook, you will find useful information about insomnia, its causes, and ways to help sleep better.

Use this program and find ways to help improve your sleep.