

Treatment

There are many types of treatments that can improve the sleep quality of people with insomnia. They are effective only if the cause of the insomnia is known. They include:

- having a healthy lifestyle
- learning relaxation techniques
- taking medication as prescribed by a doctor for any and all health problems
- seeing a therapist

Medication

Some medications are frequently prescribed to re-establish sleep routines. While they're recognized as effective, these medications should only be used temporarily.

Don't hesitate to approach your doctor or pharmacist with any questions you have.

Tips and tricks

- Only sleep the number of hours you require to feel fresh and alert.
- Exercise regularly.
- Always wake up at the same time to establish a regular bedtime. Respect this routine, even if you don't get enough sleep from time to time.
- Choose relaxing activities – your brain will rapidly associate them with sleep.
- Avoid heavy foods before bedtime; try having a light snack like a glass of warm milk and some melba toast.
- Dim the lights and keep ambient noise to a minimum.
- Reduce or eliminate stimulants like caffeine, nicotine and alcohol.
- Reserve your bedroom for sleeping; don't eat, chat on the phone or watch television there.
- Don't force yourself to sleep and don't watch the clock. The harder you try to sleep, the harder it is to fall asleep.
- Don't nap.
- If you always wake up after 30 minutes, get up, go into another room, and relax for 20 minutes or until you feel more and more drowsy, then go back to bed.

Insomnia



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What is insomnia?

Insomnia is a sleep disorder characterized by an inability to sleep or remain asleep throughout the night. People with insomnia also have a tendency to waken early or feel fatigued upon waking.

There are no overall criteria for defining insomnia: it's the frequency of the problem that counts. Ask yourself: "Do I have trouble sleeping once per year, or every night?"

A few statistics on insomnia...

In a study published in *Health Reports*, Statistics Canada estimates that 3.3 million Canadians 15 years old and older – about one person in seven – could be considered insomniacs.

Almost 20% of insomniacs sleep an average of less than five hours per night.

Do you have insomnia?

- 1) Do you have trouble going to sleep?
- 2) Do you often wake during the night?
- 3) Do you experience fatigue, irritability or difficulty concentrating throughout the day?
- 4) In the morning, do you feel tired even though the night seems to have passed normally?
- 5) Is your sleep often agitated or are you a very light sleeper?

If you answered "yes" to one of the above questions, talk to your doctor. He is the only person who can give you an insomnia diagnosis.

Causes

Do you know what the main causes of insomnia are?

- Stress and anxiety.
- The excessive or late consumption of stimulants (tea, coffee, chocolate, cola drinks, nicotine, etc.).
- Irregular schedules.
- Pain associated with specific medical conditions like arthritis.
- Excess weight or obesity.
- Certain medications.
- Abusive consumption of alcohol or cannabis.
- Hormone changes.
- Too much computer work.
- Age.

The percentage of people suffering from insomnia increases with age. Modifications to the natural sleep cycle make older people lighter sleepers. Also, age is often accompanied by chronic health issues that can themselves cause insomnia.

Consequences

Insomnia's unpleasant effects can be felt quickly. Fatigue, drowsiness, irritability and concentration problems are common examples.

These consequences are not caused by a single sleepless night, but by recurring insomnia.

