



Can't Sleep? Are You Suffering From Insomnia?

Get More Information

Insomnia is defined as not being satisfied with sleep quality or quantity, associated with 1 or more of the following symptoms¹:

- Difficulty falling asleep
- Difficulty staying asleep, or frequently waking up during the night
- Waking early in the morning with difficulty falling back asleep

To be diagnosed with insomnia, your sleep difficulties must interfere with multiple areas of your life, occur at least 3 nights per week, and persist over at least 3 months.¹

Information to Discuss With Your Doctor

There are things your doctor needs to know to assess the extent and impact of your insomnia. Your doctor will need to know how many hours you are sleeping and the specific symptoms you're having. Fill out the checklist below and share your answers with your doctor at your next appointment. The better your conversation with your doctor, the sooner your doctor can help you find a way to improve your sleep.

How many hours of sleep do you get when you have trouble sleeping (total sleep time)? ____ **HOURS**

How many nights per week do you have trouble sleeping? ____ **NIGHTS**

Do you have trouble falling asleep?¹ **YES** **NO**

Do you have trouble staying asleep?¹ **YES** **NO**

Do you consistently wake up much earlier than you want to?¹ **YES** **NO**

What parts of your life are impacted by your lack of sleep?

Fill out the checklist above, and then talk to your doctor about your specific symptoms.

? Did You Know?

The type of light, called blue light, emitted from electronic devices like your smartphone or tablet² may block your brain from producing a hormone³ that helps you to sleep.⁴ Try turning off electronics at least 1 hour before going to bed.⁵

Tips for Healthy Sleep From the National Sleep Foundation⁶

- Stick to a sleep schedule with the same bedtime and wake-up time, even on the weekends, to help regulate your body's clock
- Practice a relaxing bedtime ritual conducted away from bright light to help separate your sleep time from activities that can cause excitement, stress, or anxiety
- If you have trouble sleeping, avoid naps, especially in the afternoon
- Exercise daily
- Design your sleeping environment to be cool (60°F–67°F), quiet, and free of light
- Sleep on a comfortable mattress and pillows. It is recommended that you replace your mattress every 10 years
- Avoid bright light in the evenings and expose yourself to bright light in the mornings to help regulate your body's internal clock
- Avoid alcohol, cigarettes, and heavy meals in the evenings. Large meals should not be consumed within 2 to 3 hours of bedtime, but a light snack 45 minutes before bedtime is fine if you're still hungry

For more information, please visit the following websites:

National Sleep Foundation

<http://sleepfoundation.org>

Why Am I So Awake?

<http://www.whyamisoawake.com>

Harvard Medical School and WGBH Medical Foundation's Healthy Sleep

<http://healthysleep.med.harvard.edu>

References

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2. Harvard Medical School. Blue light has a dark side. *Harvard Health Letter*. 2012;37:4.
3. West KE, Jablonski MR, Warfield B, et al. Blue light from light-emitting diodes elicits a dose-dependent suppression of melatonin in humans. *J Appl Physiol*. 2010;110:619–626.
4. Sletten TL, Vincenzi S, Redman JR, et al. Timing of sleep and its relationship with the endogenous melatonin rhythm. *Front Neurol*. 2010;1:137.
5. Gradisar M, Wolfson AR, Harvey AG, et al. The sleep and technology use of Americans: findings from the National Sleep Foundation's 2011 Sleep in America Poll. *J Clin Sleep Med*. 2013;9:1291–1299.
6. National Sleep Foundation. Healthy sleep tips. <https://sleepfoundation.org/sleep-tools-tips/healthy-sleep-tips>. Accessed October 27, 2015.