

Trouble Sleeping



If you have trouble sleeping, you may have a hard time falling asleep or staying asleep, wake up too early, or wake up without feeling refreshed.

Trouble sleeping is also called insomnia. Insomnia simply means you aren't able to get the amount of sleep you need to feel rested. This can be for just one or two nights, or on and off for months or longer.

Not everyone needs the same amount of sleep. For adults, 7 to 9 hours is recommended. Your body needs sleep to work the way it should. So trouble sleeping can affect your job, your sense of well-being and other areas of your life. Over time, not getting enough sleep can raise your risk of other health conditions, including high blood pressure, heart disease and diabetes.

Trouble sleeping is usually a side effect of a medicine or medical condition, or the result of your lifestyle or sleep habits. Because of this, treating the cause or making changes to your routine is often enough to improve your sleep.

Symptoms

You may have trouble sleeping only now and then, or it may be a long-term problem. If the problem is ongoing, you'll probably go back and forth between a few nights of troubled sleep, then a few nights of normal sleep.

If you have trouble sleeping, you may have some of these common signs:

Nighttime and sleep symptoms:

- lying awake for 30 minutes or more before you fall asleep
- waking up during the night, or feeling awake for much of the night
- waking up too early
- waking up feeling like you haven't slept

Daytime symptoms:

- feeling sleepy
- feeling restless
- feeling irritable, depressed or anxious
- having trouble focusing
- worrying regularly about getting enough sleep

See your doctor if you have trouble sleeping for more than a few weeks, or if daytime symptoms interfere with your daily life. Your doctor needs to find out what's causing the problem to be able to help you.

Causes

Trouble sleeping can be caused by:

- **Medicines**—including some medicines for colds and allergies, heart problems, high blood pressure, pain, weight loss, asthma, depression, thyroid disease and birth control.
- **Medical conditions**—such as sleep apnea, depression, arthritis, acid reflux, cancer, heart disease and others.
- **Stress or anxiety**—as a result of stressful life events like a divorce or death, or everyday worries about things like work or relationships.
- **Caffeine and tobacco**—including stimulants like caffeinated drinks (coffee, tea and cola) and the nicotine in tobacco products.
- **Alcohol**—which prevents deep sleep, so you may wake up in the middle of the night or wake up in the morning not feeling rested.
- **Overeating before bed**—which can make you uncomfortably full or trigger acid reflux.
- **Changes to your normal sleep schedule**—due to travel or a change in work hours.
- **Unhealthy sleep habits**—including not sticking to a regular sleep schedule, doing something active right before bed, and trying to sleep where it's too noisy, light, warm or cold.



To learn more, visit
**HealthyAdvice.com/
SleepNeeds**

You can also visit these
websites:

- **American Academy of Family Physicians**
www.familydoctor.org
- **MedlinePlus**
www.medlineplus.gov
- **National Sleep Foundation**
www.sleepfoundation.org

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Treatment

Work with your doctor to find the best treatment for you. It may include:

- **Addressing medical causes**—Your doctor will help you figure out what could be causing your sleep troubles, or find ways to manage any pain or discomfort that’s affecting your sleep. If a medicine is keeping you awake, talk about other medicine options, a different dose or taking it at a different time of day.
- **Practicing positive sleep habits**—Begin with these tips:
 - Stick to a regular sleep schedule. Go to bed and get up at the same time each day, even on weekends.
 - Create a cool, dark and quiet sleep environment.
 - Don’t force sleep. If you can’t sleep or you wake up too early, go to another room. Read or listen to music until you are tired, then return to bed.
 - Get your body ready for bed. Create a relaxing nightly routine, like reading. And turn off electronics and bright lights.
 - Use your bedroom for sleep and sex only. Don’t eat or watch TV in bed.
- **Making lifestyle changes**—Start by trying the following:
 - Skip late-night food and drink. Avoid alcohol, big meals and stimulants like caffeine or chocolate, close to bedtime.
 - Stop smoking. Visit **smokefree.gov** for tools to help you quit. Or ask your doctor about medicine to make quitting easier.
 - Relax and reduce stress. Try yoga, meditation or deep breathing before bed. Daily exercise also helps release stress. But do it three hours before bed, so your body can wind down.
 - If naps help daytime sleepiness, take them for 10 to 30 minutes at most, and before 3 p.m.
- **Considering prescription medicines**—If behavior changes alone don’t work, talk to your doctor about a prescription sleep medicine. Some sleep medicines can be habit forming, so always take medicine as prescribed. And tell your doctor about any side effects. Also, ask your doctor before taking any over-the-counter sleep medicine.

Remember:

- Not getting enough sleep can affect your well-being and increase your risk of certain health conditions.
- Trouble sleeping can usually be treated by addressing the underlying cause or making changes to your daily habits.
- If you take a sleep medicine, always take it as prescribed. Talk to your doctor before taking any over-the-counter sleep aids.