

Your Care Instructions

Insomnia is the inability to sleep well. It is a common problem for most people at some time. Insomnia may make it hard for you to get to sleep, stay asleep, or sleep as long as you need to. This can make you tired and grouchy during the day. It can also make you forgetful, less effective at work and unhappy.

Insomnia can be caused by conditions such as depression or anxiety. Pain can also affect your ability to sleep. When these problems are solved, the insomnia usually clears up, but sometimes bad sleep habits can cause insomnia.

If insomnia is affecting your work or your enjoyment of life, you can take steps to improve your sleep.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor or nurse call line if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

How can you care for yourself at home?

What to avoid

- Do not have drinks with caffeine, such as coffee or black tea, for eight hours before bed.
- Do not smoke or use other types of tobacco near bedtime. Nicotine is a stimulant and can keep you awake.
- Avoid drinking alcohol late in the evening, because it can cause you to wake in the middle of the night.
- Do not eat a big meal close to bedtime. If you are hungry, eat a light snack.
- Do not drink a lot of water close to bedtime, because the need to urinate may wake you up during the night.
- Do not read or watch TV in bed. Use the bed only for sleeping and sexual activity.

What to try

- Go to bed at the same time every night, and wake up at the same time every morning. Do not take naps during the day.
- Keep your bedroom quiet, dark and cool.
- Sleep on a comfortable pillow and mattress.
- If watching the clock makes you anxious, turn it facing away from you so you cannot see the time.

- If you worry when you lie down, start a worry book. Well before bedtime, write down your worries, and then set the book and your concerns aside.
- Try meditation or other relaxation techniques before you go to bed.
- If you cannot fall asleep, get up and go to another room until you feel sleepy. Do something relaxing. Repeat your bedtime routine before you go to bed again.
- Make your house quiet and calm about an hour before bedtime. Turn down the lights, turn off the TV, log off the computer, and turn down the volume on music. This can help you relax after a busy day.

When should you call for help?

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor or nurse call line if:

- Your efforts to improve your sleep do not work.
- Your insomnia gets worse.
- You have been feeling down, depressed, or hopeless or have lost interest in things that you usually enjoy.

For 24/7 nurse advice and general health information call Health Link at 811.

Current as of: June 28, 2018

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