

Insomnia and Sleep Hygiene

What is Insomnia?

Getting adequate sleep is essential for proper mental and physical functioning. Insomnia is a form of sleep disturbance which can include difficulty falling asleep, difficulty staying asleep, or waking up too early. People who suffer from insomnia usually feel tired or sleepy during the day and can feel irritable or cranky.

How is Insomnia treated?

Lifestyle interventions, such as following good sleep hygiene, are the initial treatment for insomnia. It is important to try these steps at home first before medication or sleep aids are recommended by your doctor or nurse practitioner.

What is Sleep Hygiene?

Sleep Hygiene refers to good sleeping habits. **Follow these steps:**

- Maintain a regular sleep schedule. Go to sleep at the same time every night and wake up at the same time every day.
- Do not force yourself to sleep. You should not lie in bed trying to fall asleep for more than 20 minutes.
- If you cannot fall asleep within 20 minutes, get out of bed and go to another room and find a relaxing activity until you feel sleepy again. Avoid watching TV, studying, doing housework, or eating.
- When you start to feel sleepy go to bed and attempt falling asleep within 20 minutes.
- Do not take naps during the day.
- Avoid caffeinated beverages after lunchtime and avoid alcohol near bedtime.
- Do not go to bed hungry but avoid eating right before bedtime.
- Make sure your bedroom is quiet, dark, and a comfortable temperature.
- Avoid going to sleep with concerns or worries. Make a list of things to do the next day that will help reduce those worries.
- Exercise at least 4 hours before bedtime.