

4. Sleep

Though researchers are not certain exactly how sleep helps us we do know that when people are deprived of sleep they have less energy, memory problems, have difficulty concentrating, experience feelings of depression, become more irritable and anxious, resulting in difficulty functioning in their daily life. Getting a good night of sleep is crucial to maintaining mental and emotional well being.

Insomnia related to a depressive episode is usually considered transient. Often your health care provider will give you a sleep aide to help you normalize your sleep pattern as the antidepressant begins to work. Some of the common medications used for insomnia include Trazodone, Remeron, Ambien, Sonata, ativan or klonopin.

If you are not able to sleep it is important to let your health care provider know. It may require an adjustment in you medication.

There are also several things that you can do to help promote a good night sleep. These techniques are considered sleep hygiene.

Sleep Hygiene:

1. Set a consistent time to go to bed each night and a fixed time to get up each morning. Even if you don't fall asleep as quickly as you'd like, wake up the same time each morning. Also don't "sleep in" on the weekends.
2. If you haven't fallen asleep after 30 minutes, get up and go somewhere else. Staying in bed and worrying will prolong your insomnia. You will also start to associate your bed with worry.
3. Avoid caffeine 4-6 hours before bedtime. Caffeine is a stimulant and can keep you awake.
4. Avoid alcohol 4-6 hours before bedtime. Although people often associate alcohol with relaxation, it actually disrupts your sleep pattern.
5. Avoid naps during the day.
6. Avoid eating heavy or spicy food 4-6 hours before bedtime.

7. Incorporate exercise into your lifestyle but do not exercise within 2 hours before bedtime.
8. Create a comfortable bed
9. Find a comfortable temperature, not too cold or too hot. Keep the room well ventilated
10. Use light blocking window shade
11. Block out noises or distractions.
12. Reserve your bed for only sleep and sex.
13. Do not fall asleep with the TV on.

Other tips that may help you sleep better:

- Take a warm bath to relax your muscles.
- Get a massage.
- Listen to soothing music.
- Give yourself a "worry" time, 1-2 hours before you go to bed during which you allow yourself to think about your worries. Try to leave your worries in your worry time.
- Drink warm milk.
- Drink herbal teas.
- Sleep on a firm mattress.
- Use relaxation techniques.

In adopting sleep hygiene techniques, it is important to use all of the techniques and to abide by them on a regular basis. If you only adopt some of them you may find that they not that effective and you may become frustrated.

Resources

The Insomnia Answer: A Personalized Program for Identifying and Overcoming the Three Types of Insomnia (Paperback)
by [Paul Glovinsky](#), [Art Spielman](#)

Disclaimer:

This written information is not intended as a substitute for medical or mental health care advice. Please be sure to discuss any questions or concerns you may have with a professional person.