

# CAN'T SLEEP? YOU MAY HAVE **INSOMNIA**



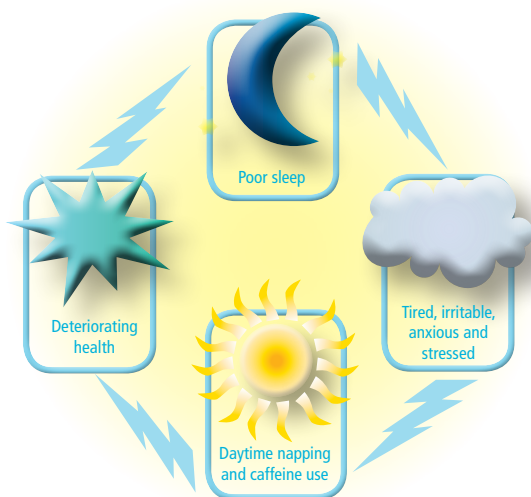
*holding your hand through health*

# Are you tossing and turning at night? Do you have trouble sleeping and suffer from the following symptoms?<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>

- Struggling for more than 30 minutes to fall asleep
- Waking up frequently and struggling to fall asleep again
- Waking up too early in the morning
- Feeling tired when waking up in the morning

Then you could be suffering from insomnia. These are all symptoms that may leave you feeling tired or sleepy during the day.<sup>3</sup> Insomnia can affect your ability to function during the day<sup>3</sup> and your ability to concentrate.<sup>1</sup> Waking up unrefreshed can make you moody and irritable<sup>1,2</sup> and can worsen depression and anxiety.<sup>3</sup>

Getting the quality sleep you need is as important to your health as regular exercise and a healthy diet.<sup>3</sup> While your health can cause you to lose sleep,<sup>2</sup> insomnia can also affect your health,<sup>3</sup> resulting in a vicious cycle.<sup>5</sup> In short, if you don't get the rest you need, your overall health and quality of life are likely to deteriorate.<sup>3</sup>



Adapted from Smith, M., Saisan, J., Robinson, L., et al<sup>5</sup>

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The good news is that insomnia is usually treatable<sup>3</sup> and you do not have to continue living with it.<sup>3</sup>

## Types and causes of insomnia

Insomnia can be related to another medical condition or the use of medication or a substance such as alcohol.<sup>1</sup> This is called secondary insomnia.<sup>2</sup> Sometimes, insomnia is not related to anything else and is then called primary insomnia.<sup>2</sup>

### Acute insomnia

**A short-term problem. It may last from one night to a few weeks.<sup>2</sup>**

#### **Causes may include:<sup>2</sup>**

- Significant life stress such as the death of a loved one, job loss or change, divorce, moving, etc.
- Emotional or physical discomfort
- Environmental factors such as noise, light and extreme heat or cold
- Interference in normal sleeping patterns such as jet lag or switching shifts
- Acute illness
- Some medications such as those used to treat colds

### Chronic insomnia

**If you continue to have problems sleeping for at least 3 nights per week, for a month or longer, you are considered to be suffering from chronic insomnia.<sup>2</sup>**

#### **Causes may include:<sup>1,2</sup>**

- Depression and/or anxiety
- Stress
- Pain or discomfort<sup>2</sup>
- Other sleep disorders such as sleep apnoea or restless leg syndrome
- Hormonal changes (pregnancy, menopause)
- Asthma<sup>3</sup>
- Heartburn<sup>3</sup>

**Do not suffer unnecessarily; speak to your Healthcare Professional about suitable treatment options to resolve these underlying medical conditions, so you can sleep better.<sup>3</sup>**

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## Living better to sleep better...

Changing your lifestyle and adopting a few good habits can help you get a good night's sleep.<sup>2</sup> The following are some useful tips that you can easily implement:<sup>2,3</sup>

- 1 Exercise for at least 20 – 30 minutes per day. Make sure that you complete all exercises at least 5 to 6 hours before bedtime.<sup>3</sup>
- 2 Limit caffeine intake by reducing the amount of coffee and other drinks containing caffeine and avoid caffeine after lunch time.<sup>3</sup>
- 3 Do not take daytime naps. If you cannot get by without a nap, do not sleep for longer than 30 minutes and no naps after 3 pm in the afternoon.<sup>3</sup>
- 4 Check with your pharmacist or doctor that the medication you take won't keep you awake.<sup>3</sup>
- 5 Avoid large meals before going to bed, but don't go to bed hungry either. A light snack before bedtime will prevent you from waking up hungry.<sup>3</sup> Avoid drinking too much liquids so you won't need to urinate during the night.<sup>3</sup>
- 6 Pain is often the cause of sleeplessness. Discuss pain relief options with your pharmacist or doctor since a pain-free night may improve quality of sleep.<sup>3</sup>
- 7 Make your bedroom comfortable for sleeping – limit the amount of light and noise and maintain a comfortable temperature, a bit cooler than daytime temperatures.<sup>3</sup>
- 8 Avoid working or eating in bed.<sup>3</sup>
- 9 Make a to-do-list to take care of any worries or concerns that you have so you don't have to focus on them at night.<sup>2</sup>
- 10 Set an alarm to get up in the morning and then hide or remove all bedroom clocks so that you don't worry about what time it is.<sup>3</sup>
- 11 Follow a relaxing routine before bedtime each night such as reading or playing soft music.<sup>2</sup> Avoid watching television or working on computer or cellphone screens as the light may stimulate you and keep you awake.<sup>3</sup>
- 12 Stick to a strict schedule – go to bed at the same time each night and get up at the same time each morning. Maintain this schedule over weekends as well.<sup>3</sup>
- 13 If you cannot fall asleep, get up, do something relaxing and return to bed only when you feel drowsy.<sup>2</sup>

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**If you are still having problems sleeping when adhering to good sleep hygiene, you will need to discuss further treatment options with your Healthcare Professional.<sup>3</sup>**

It may be useful to keep a sleep diary with information on the time it takes to fall asleep, awake times during the night and how you feel during the day.<sup>3</sup> Remember to also record daytime naps and take this information and any other medication you are using with you when you go to the doctor.<sup>3</sup>

## **Treatment of insomnia**

It is always best to first speak to a doctor who may refer you for behaviour therapy sessions to help you change your behaviour and thinking about sleep.<sup>3</sup> Your doctor may also consider prescribing medication to assist you with your sleeping problems.<sup>3</sup>

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Adcock Ingram Limited. Reg. No. 1949/034385/06. 1 New Road, Midrand, 1685. Private Bag X69, Bryanston, 2021.  
Tel. +27 11 635 0000. 2019022810125659.