

A Guide for Patients and Families

Tips on Managing Insomnia

Overview

Sleep problems are common and can result in us feeling tired and affect how we function during the day, impacting our ability to concentrate on work and affecting our work performance. Sleep problems are usually the result of bodily discomfort, thoughts or worries, or outside factors.

Insomnia is a common sleep disorder that can cause difficulties in falling asleep, stay asleep, or wake up too early and not able to get back to sleep.



Physical & Psychological Causes:

- Medical and mental illnesses.
- Side effects of medications.
- Sleep disorders such as sleep apnoea (breathing difficulties while sleep) and restless leg syndrome.
- Going to bed hungry.



Environmental Causes:

- Being too warm or cold.
- Bedroom too bright or noisy at night.
- Changes to environment.

Poor sleep hygiene:

- Spending too much time in bed during the day.
- Taking too many naps during the day.
- Having too much stimulation before bedtime.
- Taking an excessive amount of caffeine or alcohol during the day.





Signs & Symptoms

Physical:

- Headache
- Dizziness

Emotional:

- Low mood.



Performance:

- Lack of concentration.

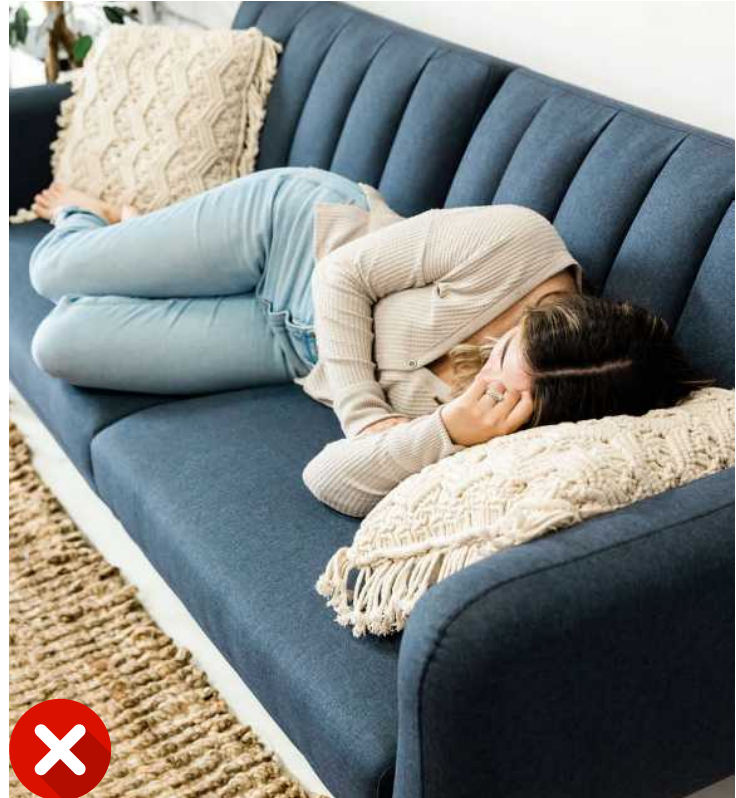
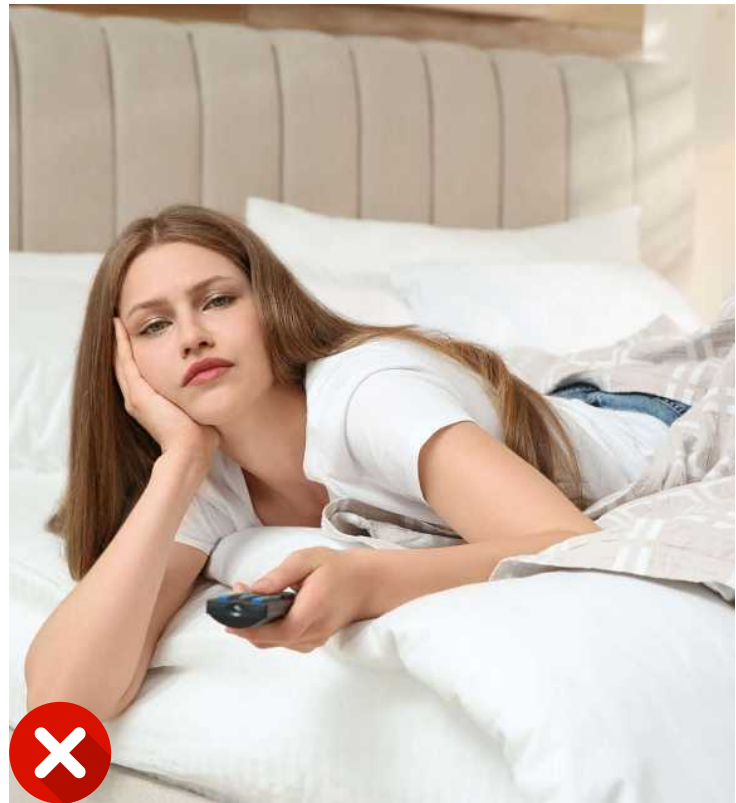
Diagnosis & Treatment

- Sleep laboratory for studying sleep disorders.
- Videoendoscopic Computer-assisted measurement (CAM).



Care and management of Insomnia

- Go to bed only when you feel sleepy.
- Sleep the same time every day. Wake up at a regular time even on days off and on weekends.
- Avoid daytime naps.
- Avoid over stimulation by not watching TV, reading or using of phone while in bed.
- Limit caffeine/alcohol intake, avoid cigarettes during the day. Caffeine is best to consume before noon as the effects can last for several hours.
- Some over-the-counter medications may affect sleep.
- Avoid heavy meals just before bedtime. If you are hungry, a light snack before bed may help you sleep.
- Have a quiet comfortable bedroom. Switch off the TV and other devices producing noise that may affect sleep. Keep the bedroom dark and switch off bright lights.
- Get comfortable before bed such as a warm bath and quiet time for meditation to help you relax.
- Practice relaxation techniques before bed. This will help to relax both mind and body, reduce anxiety or muscle tension that may be keeping you awake at night.



Sleep disorders and chronic sleep loss can put you at risk for:

- Heart disease
- Heart attack
- Heart failure
- Irregular heartbeat
- Hypertension
- Stroke
- Diabetes



Sleep deprivation can lead to:

- Clinical depression
- Ageing skin
- Shortened attention span
- Weight gain

Please inform your doctor if your sleep problems persist or you are experiencing symptoms such as pain or breathlessness affecting your sleep. Medicine may be prescribed to improve your sleep.