

Why You Need Sleep

Getting enough sleep and good quality sleep helps you maintain good health and function your best during the day.

You need sleep to:

- Have energy.
- Think clearly.
- React quickly.
- Be productive.
- Learn and remember things.
- Help your immune system fight infections.



According to the National Sleep Foundation, about 50% of adults in the U.S. have problems with sleep at least a few nights a week. And recent studies find that the average person gets less than 6 hours of sleep per night. (On average, adults need at least 7 to 8 hours of sleep each night.)

A lack of sleep or getting poor quality sleep can lead to a wide range of health problems.

Health Problems from a Lack of Sleep

- Anxiety, depression, and alcohol abuse.
- Obesity.
- Heart disease.
- High blood pressure.
- Diabetes.
- Stroke.
- Gum disease.
- Accidents and an increased risk for injury and death. About 20% of all serious car crashes are linked to driver sleepiness. Also, workers with severe insomnia make 2½ times more serious work errors than persons who get proper sleep.

Getting enough, quality sleep is as vital to good health and long life as are healthy eating and regular exercise.



Do You Have Insomnia?

Answer these questions:

- | | | |
|--|-----|----|
| 1. Do you have trouble falling asleep? | Yes | No |
| 2. Do you have problems staying asleep? | Yes | No |
| 3. Do you wake up too early and can't get back to sleep? | Yes | No |
| 4. Do any of these problems last at least 3 weeks? | Yes | No |

If you answered yes to number 4, answer these questions about problems that occur when you are awake:

- | | | |
|---|-----|----|
| 5. Do you feel like you do not get enough refreshing sleep? | Yes | No |
| 6. Do you yawn and feel tired? | Yes | No |

(You may fall asleep when you aren't trying to.)

- | | | |
|---|-----|----|
| 7. Do you lack energy or have fatigue? | Yes | No |
| 8. Do you have a hard time concentrating? | Yes | No |
| 9. Do you feel depressed and/or cranky? | Yes | No |

If you answered yes to question number 4 and yes to any question from number 5 through 9, you could have insomnia.

Read on for ways to help you overcome insomnia and have more energy during the day.



Do's & Don'ts for Insomnia - Exercise

Do's

- Do regular exercise daily. Physical activity releases muscle tension, relieves anger, and improves mood.
- Do mild exercises four or more hours before bedtime.
- Do relaxation exercises as needed throughout the day and before you go to bed.

Don'ts

- Don't do vigorous exercise within six hours of going to bed.



Do's & Don'ts for Insomnia - Eating

Do's

- Follow a regular daily schedule for meals and snacks.
- Choose larger meals at breakfast and lunch than at dinner. At each meal, have complex carbohydrate foods, such as whole-grain breads and cereals, fruits and vegetables.

Don'ts

- Don't have large meals near bedtime. These may keep you awake, especially if you have heartburn or a similar problem.

Do's & Don'ts for Insomnia - Caffeine

Caffeine is a stimulant drug. It increases alertness. Caffeine can interfere with sleep in these ways:

- It can make it take longer for you to fall asleep.
- It can make you wake up more often when you are sleeping.
- It can lower the amount of deep sleep you get.

Do's

- Limit caffeine to 300 milligrams (mgs.) a day. More than 500 to 600 mgs. a day may cause you to be anxious, nervous, and makes it harder to sleep well.
- Cut down on caffeine gradually. Daily usage of caffeine can result in physical dependence. If caffeine is stopped abruptly, withdrawal symptoms can occur. These include headache, feeling down, having a hard time concentrating, and fatigue.

Don'ts

- Don't have caffeine for 6 hours before bedtime.



Where's the Caffeine?

Item	Amount	Caffeine in Milligrams
Coffee: Brewed, plain	8 oz.	137 (average)
Starbucks' Grande	16 oz.	259
Instant	8 oz.	76 to 95
Decaffeinated	8 oz.	3 to 6
Tea: Black, 1-minute brew	8 oz.	32 to 54
5-minute brew	8 oz.	62 to 90
Green	8 oz.	25 to 40
Instant	8 oz.	26 to 36
Energy / Sports Drinks:		
Full Throttle	16 oz.	144
Red Bull	8.5 oz.	80
SoBe No Fear	16 oz.	158
Cola	12 oz.	33 to 65
Mountain Dew	12 oz.	55
Hot Cocoa	12 oz.	3 to 24
Chocolate: Sweet, dark	1 oz.	20
Milk chocolate	1 oz.	1 to 15
Excedrin Migraine	1 tablet	65
No-Doz	1 tablet	100