

Title: Insomnia: A Treatment Guide for Patients

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Abstract: Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) has been shown in many studies to be superior to medications in the treatment of a variety of types of insomnia. CBT is administered over several sessions and utilizes techniques of psychotherapy, sleep restriction, stimulus control, sleep hygiene, passive wakefulness, and relaxation training. An abbreviated form of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy designed for use in Primary Care settings has shown similar results to standard length CBT, and superior results compared to sleep hygiene advice typical of a Primary Care setting. For the Primary Care Physician who has the time and resources to learn and implement CBT, CBT holds promise as an effective treatment for insomnia in a Primary Care setting. This PET was designed to teach patients about CBT for the treatment of insomnia.

This document was created by a medical student enrolled in the Primary Care Clerkship at the University of Minnesota Medical School as part of the course project. The aim of the project is to present information on a medical topic in the format of a patient education handout. It does not necessarily reflect the views of the University of Minnesota Medical School physicians and faculty. These materials are provided for informational purposes only and are in no way intended to take the place of the advice and recommendations of your personal health care provider. The information provided may no longer be up to date since it has not been reviewed since the date of creation. The information provided should not be used to diagnose a health problem or disease, or as a means of determining treatment. In the event of a medical emergency, immediately contact a doctor or call 911.

WHERE CAN I GO FOR TREATMENT?

- Primary Care Provider
- Sleep Specialist or a Sleep Center



MORE RESOURCES

Information on Insomnia

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/insomnia/DS00187>

Information on Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/insomnia-treatment/sl00013>

Sleep Centers in Minnesota

<http://www.sleepcenters.org/Centers.aspx?state=MN>

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Insomnia

A Treatment Guide for Patients



WHAT IS INSOMNIA?

Insomnia is the inability to get the amount of sleep you as an individual need to wake up feeling rested.

Symptoms may include:

- difficulty falling asleep
- waking up often in the night
- difficulty returning to sleep
- waking up too early in the morning
- unrefreshing sleep

If these symptoms last for several weeks, it is considered short-term insomnia. More than 1 month is considered chronic insomnia.

WHAT CAUSES INSOMNIA?

- Stress
- Anxiety or Depression
- Other Medical Conditions
- Medications
- Changes in environment or work schedule
- Poor sleep habits
- Learned insomnia*

**Learned insomnia – A condition that results when the worry about not sleeping causes an inability to fall asleep.*



HOW CAN INSOMNIA BE TREATED?

Talk to your doctor about identifying causes of your insomnia. Certain medication or medical causes can be addressed without more extensive insomnia treatment.

Occasionally sleeping medications are appropriate for short term use, but often these medications hide the true problem.

The most effective treatment for many kinds of insomnia is something called *Cognitive Behavioral Therapy*. It is not a “quick fix,” and it takes some time and effort on your part to work well. It has many different components because insomnia can have multiple causes. Some components of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy include:

- **Cognitive control and psychotherapy.** This type of therapy helps you control or eliminate bad thoughts and worries that keep you awake. Sometimes people carry false beliefs about their sleep. So, cognitive therapy might also include education about sleep, so you know what is true and what is not about both sleep and insomnia.
- **Sleep restriction.** This approach works to match the time you spend in bed with how much you actually need to sleep. Not everyone needs to sleep 8 hours. Decreasing the amount of time you spend in bed without sleeping will actually increase your body’s desire to sleep.

- **Remain passively awake.** Trying hard to fall asleep can make some people wide awake. This component helps you avoid any effort to fall asleep, which can decrease anxiety about falling asleep.
- **Stimulus control.** This method helps you make your bedroom a place you associate with sleep. It takes away things like television, work, food and other things that can distract you from sleep. For example, you might be coached to use your bed only for sleep and sex.
- **Sleep hygiene.** This method works to correct basic habits that effect sleep - like smoking, drinking too much coffee or alcohol late in the day, and failing to exercise regularly. It also includes tips that help you sleep better, such as doing something relaxing before bed, keeping a regular sleep schedule.
- **Relaxation training.** This method helps you relax so you can sleep better. It may include meditation, hypnosis and muscle relaxation.
- **Biofeedback.** This method measures things like the tightness of your muscles and can help you control them

