

Title: Insomnia: Treatment before medication

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Abstract: Insomnia is a common problem facing as many as half of American adults. It includes difficulty falling asleep, staying asleep, and early morning awakenings. It can be caused by medications, medical conditions, and poor sleep hygiene. Mild insomnia can be effectively managed by lifestyle changes and behavioral therapy. Pharmacologic therapy is appropriate for some patients as adjunctive therapy or for those with severe symptoms.

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Insomnia

What you can do to help you sleep!

As many as 50% of American adults have difficulty sleeping.



Some things you may not know...

- Older people have more sleep problems because of natural changes, medical conditions, and multiple medications.
- Some cold medications, heart and blood pressure medications, and antidepressants can cause insomnia
- Changing sleep habits can be as effective as medication in patients with mild symptoms

Things YOU can do to improve your sleep...

1. Use your bed only for sleeping ...don't read or watch TV in your bed
2. If you can't fall asleep, leave your bedroom and do something else...once you are tired go back to sleep.
3. Don't use alcohol for sleep...it may help you fall asleep but will wake you up more in the middle of the night
4. Avoid caffeine, nicotine, heavy meals, and heavy exercise before bed
5. Wake up at the same time every morning, no matter what time you go to sleep
6. Exercise daily...but not right before bed

You may have a ¹medical condition affecting your sleep if...

- You are overweight, snore loudly, and are very sleepy during the day
- You are getting up multiple times during the night to pee

Medications can be used as a short-term solution to get you back on track. It can be used long term but because of increased cost and side effects should be used in more severe cases.

All information was taken from: Ringdahl EN, Pereira SL, Delzell JE. Treatment of Primary Insomnia. Journal of the American Board of Family Physicians. 17(3) 2004.