

Tips for Managing Insomnia (Difficulty Sleeping)



Things you can do on your own

- Avoid caffeine and alcohol for at least 6 hours before bedtime.
- Drink warm milk or decaffeinated tea at bedtime.
- Take a warm bath to help you relax.
- Try to avoid napping during the day.
- Try meditation, guided imagery, progressive muscle relaxation, or massage.
- Try biofeedback, hypnosis, and thought stopping.
- Try deep breathing.
- Stay away from screens (phone, tablet, and TV) before bedtime. Avoid screens in bed.
- Establish a bedtime routine, and try to go to sleep and wake up at the same time each day.
- Exercise during the day, but not within 3 hours of bedtime.
 - Try to be active for at least 15-30 minutes every day. Walking is a good option. If 30 minutes of exercise is too hard, break it up into shorter sessions. For example, try three, 10-minute sessions.
- Try cognitive behavioral therapy with a certified therapist.
- Try to continue with your normal activities.



With over-the-counter medications

Ask your care team if you can take over-the-counter medications to help with insomnia. You can buy them at your local drugstore. Take them as directed on the package.

- If your insomnia is related to mild to moderate pain, taking pain medication such as acetaminophen (Tylenol) may help.
- Benadryl is an antihistamine that is available in pill or liquid form. It may help make you feel sleepy.
- Melatonin can help some people sleep.



With the help of your care team

Ask your care team about prescription medications to help with sleep.

- If your insomnia is related to severe pain, taking prescription pain medication may help.
- If your insomnia is related to depression or anxiety, taking an antidepressant or anti-anxiety medication may help.
- Talk to your care team about what is causing your insomnia.



When to call your care team for help

- If you are confused during the night



For more information and support, visit the American Cancer Society website at cancer.org/insomnia or call us at **1-800-227-2345**. We're here when you need us.