



## Insomnia

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Out of all sleep disorders, insomnia is the most well-known. It refers to the inability to fall asleep and means “sleeplessness”.

There are many myths surrounding insomnia, most of which come either from popular culture, or traditions and art. Today, we are used to lightly claiming that insomnia is a part of our lives, without giving it much thought, as if it is a badge of honor. However, insomnia can be a severe struggle, for those who have to deal with the disorder.

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## General Types of Insomnia

This inability to fall asleep, or struggling with a poor quality of sleep, can come in different forms:

### Initial Insomnia

The dreaded difficulty of being unable to fall asleep, no matter how tired you were during the day. This is potentially dangerous as it can lead to sleep deprivation.

### Middle Insomnia

Waking up several times during the night, in other words – having a fragmented sleep pattern,

and having a hard time going back to sleep.

## **Terminal insomnia**

Refers to a condition, where people wake up much earlier than necessary and can't fall asleep again, no matter what they try. Going to bed earlier does not help those who struggle with terminal insomnia.

## **Acute Insomnia**

Occasional episodes of insomnia, or acute insomnia, as it is scientifically known, are lapses in sleep, that last anywhere from one night, to several weeks. Outside of the episode, the individual may not have any sleep-related issues. With acute insomnia, there is usually one or two reasons for the individual's inability to sleep or inability to get refreshing sleep, and those factors are easily identifiable. An episode of acute insomnia can also occur to jet lag or working in shifts.

## **Chronic Insomnia**

As you probably know, a chronic condition is one that is a constant in a person's life and results in recurrent health problems. To be able to talk about chronic insomnia, symptoms must be present at least three times a week, for at least three months. Naturally, chronic insomnia can be very damaging to a person's health, since it leads to long-term sleep deprivation.

## **Symptoms**

Fatigue and difficulty to concentrate are a given when talking about insomnia, but there's a very long list of other symptoms that this disorder can drag along as well:

- Impulsiveness and difficulty making rational decisions
- Aggression and irritability
- Headaches, muscle pain, and pain throughout the body
- Signs of depression or anxiety
- Gastrointestinal problems.
- Cognitive impairment and daytime sleepiness, which can lead to problems at school or work, as well as issues with driving or handling other daily activities
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The experience of tension and worry about sleep

## Studying Your Sleep

There is a multiple-component sleep study that can be performed so that you can be provided with a more specific diagnosis. It's called polysomnography.

It usually involves spending the night at a specialized sleep clinic, where professionals can carefully monitor your sleep patterns. The polysomnography test is performed for a variety of reasons. It helps identify abnormal sleep patterns, and can sometimes find the reason behind them. A polysomnography can be performed for a variety of sleep disorders, but most commonly those include sleep apnea, abnormal behavior during sleep, chronic insomnia, narcolepsy.

Still, most insomnia diagnoses are made with the help of a general physical exam, as well as a psychological consultation. In both cases, your doctor and psychologist can recommend specialists, who are trained and well-equipped to examine your sleep.

## You Have the Solution

The majority of chronic cases require some form of medication, along with therapeutic exercises. The causes behind insomnia falls into one or several of the five categories previously mentioned (psychological, medical, environmental, psychiatrically caused, or substance-related). However, there is always good news, and in this case, it is that you can diminish the symptoms greatly, by working on your habits and thoughts.

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