



A good night's rest

Getting quality sleep matters. Many adults have problems sleeping, called insomnia. Not getting enough sleep can cause weight gain, worsen mood and memory, and make it harder to perform everyday tasks. It can also put you at risk for chronic medical problems.

There are many ways to improve sleep. Take some simple steps at home or talk to your healthcare professional.



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There are several ways to help improve your sleep—habits and behaviors are the most effective

- Developing good sleep habits, also called **sleep hygiene**, can make falling and staying asleep easier.
- **Cognitive behavioral therapy for insomnia (CBT-I)** is one of the best treatments for people with insomnia. It is easily accessible through therapists, websites, and smartphone apps.
- **Medications** may be an option for some people, after a discussion with your healthcare professional.

Sometimes **life changes**, like a new job, promotion, moving, or the death of a loved one, can cause problems with sleep. The good news is that typically this will get better over time.

Sleep hygiene tips

There are several simple steps you can take at home to help get better sleep.

1. Set a sleep schedule.

Get up at the same time each day.

2. Get in bed *only* when tired.

Don't "try" to fall asleep. Go to bed when you are tired. If you can't fall asleep, get up after 20-30 minutes, do something relaxing, and go back to bed when you are tired.

3. Try to get sunlight when awake.

4. Get regular physical activity.

5. Set up an environment that helps with sleep.

Dim the lights and reduce distracting noise. Don't have visible clocks close to your bed.

6. Avoid alcohol, caffeine, and nicotine after mid-afternoon.

7. Create a bedtime routine.

Using a similar process every night helps signal to the body that it is time for sleep. Minimize the use of phones, televisions, and other electronic devices before bed. If screens are needed, use glasses or other tools that reduce blue light.



For more sleep resources,
visit [sleepeducation.org](https://www.sleepeducation.org)

Cognitive behavioral therapy for insomnia (CBT-I)

CBT-I is the most effective treatment for insomnia. It works by helping to change your thoughts and behaviors about sleep, and to offer healthy habits and relaxation techniques. Patients who use CBT-I often experience rapid improvements in sleep that can last for months or years after treatment ends.

How CBT-I is delivered

Treatment occurs over the course of 4 to 8 sessions, usually spread over a few weeks. The length of the session varies by provider and format.

Where to find CBT-I

In-person (individual or group)

- cbti.directory
- findatherapist.com
- mentalhealthmatch.com
- helloalma.com
- headway.co

Digital apps

- Sleep Reset
- Night owl

Online modules

- cbtforinsomnia.com
- drugfreesleep.com



Medications for insomnia

There are several types of medications that can be used to treat insomnia. Typically, medicines should be used for short periods of time. Some that are recommended for older adults include:

- doxepin (Silenor)
- ramelteon (Rozerem)
- daridorexant (Quviviq),
lemborexant (Dayvigo),
suvorexant (Belsomra)



Discuss medication risks and benefits with your healthcare professional

- **Some medications can cause dangerous side effects for older adults,** such as “Z-drugs” like zolpidem (Ambien) and benzodiazepines like temazepam (Restoril).
- **Tell your healthcare professional about over-the-counter medications you take.** Products like Tylenol PM, Unisom, and ZzzQuil contain diphenhydramine (Benadryl) or a similar medication that can cause significant side effects in older adults.

Evidence shows that cognitive behavioral therapy for insomnia (CBT-I) works better than medications.

The effects of CBT-I are also longer-lasting than medications. See the inside of this brochure for more on CBT-I.

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These are general recommendations only; specific clinical decisions should be made by the treating clinician based on an individual patient's clinical condition.

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