

## What is Insomnia?

Insomnia is a common sleep disorder. Insomnia can be defined as a frequent and persistent difficulty initiating or maintaining sleep that results in general sleep dissatisfaction.

People who have insomnia may experience difficulties initiating sleep or difficulties maintaining sleep. The latter complaint may include waking up during the night with difficulty returning to sleep or having a final awakening occurring too early, well before the desired rising time.

If you have insomnia, you may:

- find it difficult to fall asleep
- wake up multiple times during the night
- wake up too early in the morning
- not feel refreshed when you get up in the morning
- feel exhausted
- become irritable
- have difficulty concentrating

For some people, a period of insomnia will pass without causing any serious problems, but for others the problem can persist for months or years.

Chronic or persistent insomnia can have a significant impact. The sleep complaint can be accompanied by distress about poor sleep and/or impairment in family, social, vocational, academic or other areas of functioning. Furthermore, the sleep disturbance and associated waking symptoms occur despite having adequate time and circumstances each night to obtain necessary sleep.

It can occur in isolation or alongside a mental disorder or other medical condition. Common waking symptoms include fatigue, reduced motivation, reduced concentration, attention and memory functioning and irritability or reduced mood. Complaints of subjective daytime sleepiness are also common, although many with insomnia are unable to nap in the daytime, and few show unintentional sleep episodes. Reports of reduced performance at work or impaired social functioning are also common. Some affected individuals attribute errors or accidents at work to their sleep difficulties.

Source: American Academy of Sleep Medicine - International Classification of Sleep Disorders, Third Edition.

