



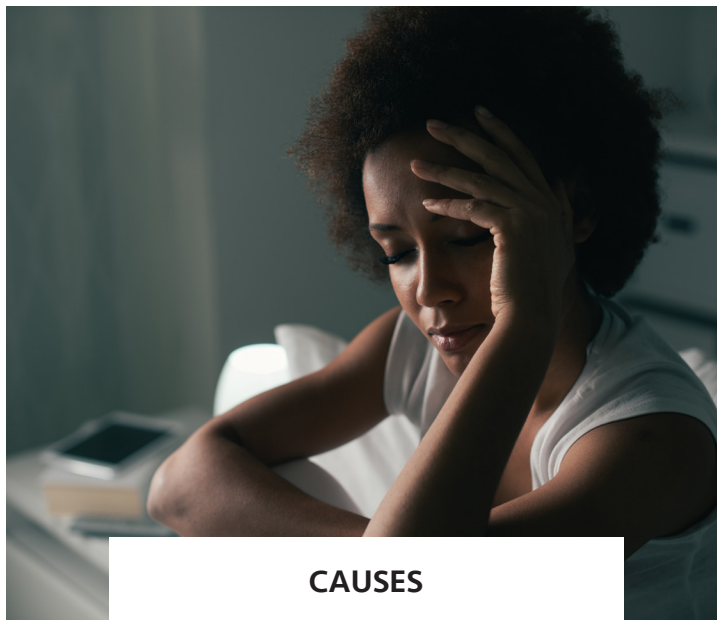
# Insomnia in women

Insomnia is having trouble falling and staying asleep. It can last from a single night to a few weeks. It can occur from time to time or be a chronic problem.



## SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

- Waking up during the night and not being able to get back to sleep.
- Waking up too early.
- Not getting enough sleep or getting poor quality sleep.
- Fatigue or feeling drowsy during the day because of lack of sleep.



## CAUSES

- Too much caffeine or alcohol, or having it before bedtime.
- Changes in sleep/wake schedules, such as work shift changes and jet lag.
- Any problem that causes you to urinate during the night.
- Too much noise when you fall asleep, such as a snoring partner.
- Menopausal symptoms, such as hot flashes.
- Frequently taking long daytime naps.
- Side effects of some medicines, such as decongestants, corticosteroids, and stay-awake pills.
- Lack of physical exercise.
- Emotional stress, depression, anxiety.
- Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).
- Fibromyalgia.
- Any condition, illness, injury, or surgery that causes pain and/or discomfort which interrupts sleep.
- Asthma, allergies, and early-morning wheezing.
- An overactive thyroid gland.
- Heart or lung conditions that cause shortness of breath when lying down.



## TREATMENT

- Self-care and prevention measures.
- Treating the problem.
- Cognitive behavior counseling for long-term insomnia.
- Prescribed short-acting sleeping pills.



## TRIAGE QUESTIONS



Do you have trouble falling or staying asleep due to any of these problems?

- Pain or discomfort due to illness or injury.
- The need to wake up to use the bathroom.
- Hot flashes.

**NO**  
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**YES** ➔ **SEE DOCTOR**



Has your sleep been disturbed since you began taking medication of any kind? Or, do you have bothersome side effects from taking prescribed sleeping pills?

**NO**  
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**YES** ➔ **CALL DOCTOR**



Do you still have trouble sleeping after 3 weeks, with or without using self-care?

**NO**  
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**YES** ➔ **CALL DOCTOR**



**USE SELF-CARE**



## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

National Center on Sleep Disorders Research  
[nhlbi.nih.gov/health-topics/insomnia](https://nhlbi.nih.gov/health-topics/insomnia)

National Sleep Foundation  
[sleepfoundation.org](https://sleepfoundation.org)



## SELF-CARE / PREVENTION

- Try to go to sleep and wake up at the same time each day.
- Avoid caffeine for 8 hours before bedtime. Caffeine is in coffee, tea, chocolate, soft drinks and energy drinks. Check labels for caffeine content in over-the-counter medicines.
- Avoid long daytime naps.
- Have no more than 1 alcoholic drink with or after dinner. Even though alcohol is a sedative, it can disrupt sleep. Check with your doctor about using any alcohol if you are taking medicines.
- An hour or two before going to bed, dim the lights in the house.
- Do regular exercise, but not within a few hours of going to bed.
- Before bedtime, take a warm bath or read a book or do some type of repetitive, calm activity. Avoid things that may play over in your mind, such as watching a suspenseful movie.
- Keep your bedroom quiet, dark, cool and comfortable. Use clean, fresh sheets and pillows.
- Avoid eating large meals close to bedtime.
- Turn off all electronic devices before bedtime, especially cellphones and tablets 30-60 minutes before bedtime. The blue light they emit may disturb your natural sleep cycle.
- Ban worry from the bedroom. Don't rehash the mistakes of the day as you toss and turn.
- Follow a regular bedtime routine. Lock or check doors and windows, brush your teeth, etc.
- Count sheep! Picturing a repeated image may bore you to sleep.
- Listen to recordings or download a sleep app that helps promote sleep.
- If you've tried to fall asleep, but are still awake after 30 minutes, get out of bed. Read a relaxing book or sit quietly in the dark. Do this for about 20 minutes. Then go back to bed. Repeat this as many times as you need to until you are able to fall asleep.
- Take over-the-counter sleep aids (e.g., melatonin, Tylenol PM, etc.) as advised by your doctor. Don't take anyone else's sleeping pills.