



## ***Sleep Problem***

### **What is a sleep problem?**

A sleep problem, often called insomnia, may be keeping you from getting a good night's sleep. This may make you feel bad during the day. Trouble falling or staying asleep is a common problem. About half of Americans have sleep difficulty at least sometimes. Sleep problems are more common in women and older people. Many things can cause sleep problems.

Sleep problem may be last for a few days, for 1 to 3 weeks, or it can be chronic lasting for more than 3 weeks.

### **Why do I need sleep?**

Sleep is an important part of our daily lives and health. Most adults need about 8 hours of sleep each night. However, it can be varied for each person – anywhere from 4 to 11 hours. Sleep problems can become serious. It can make you feel less able to do your work and can make you feel tense. People with sleep problems may feel more tired or sad. Sleep problems cause trouble thinking and sleepiness during the day that may lead to car wrecks.

### **What can I do to sleep better?**

You might try “sleep self-care methods” for your sleep problem.

#### **~ 10 Ways to Sleep Better ~**

1. Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day.
2. Use the bedroom for sleeping. Make sure your bedroom is quiet and dark. No TV.
3. Do not use alcohol and caffeine in the evening.
4. Do not eat too much right before bedtime.
5. Try not to take naps during the day longer than 20 to 30 minutes.
6. Try a little exercise regularly during the day.
7. Cut back on or stop smoking.
8. Get out of bed if you're not sleeping.
9. Do not start worrying about things when you go to bed.
10. Do the same thing every night before going to bed to help your body get ready for sleep.

## How can sleep problem be treated?

There are choices using over-the-counter medications or prescription medications. Sleep problems should be only treated for a short time, up to a few weeks. Longer use of sleep aids is not good because these can make your sleep problem worse or cause side effects. They are only used to help for a few weeks, not to cure your sleep problem. Treatment with medications should only be used with “sleep self-care methods”.

- **Over-the-Counter (OTC) Medications:**

These are often used for allergies. They are available at any retail pharmacy and may help some people. However, you should be watch for side effects from these medications such as sleeping too long, dry mouth, trouble peeing, or constipation. These happen more in older people. These medicines may also have interactions with your other medications.

Herbal products or nutritional supplements are available – *valerian*, *chamomile*, and *melatonin*. However, they have possible side effects and interactions with other drugs as well.

- **Prescription Medications:**

These medications do work well for some people for a short time. They may change your normal sleep patterns and may make you groggy the next day. The other common side effects are daytime sleepiness, dizziness, headache, nightmares, and nausea. They do not work as well over time, so higher and higher doses will be needed.

There are a variety of prescription medications are now available. Talk to your doctor or health-care provider about your sleep problems and find out if a sleep medication may be right for you.

## When should I see my doctor?

- You are often very sleepy and tired during the day.
- You think your sleep problems may be related to your disease, such as depression or heart problems.
- You snore loudly or make gasping noises while you sleep.
- You fall asleep while you are talking, driving, or eating.
- You think your medication is causing your sleep problem.