

You Can Overcome Insomnia

What is Insomnia?

Insomnia is difficulty falling asleep, staying asleep, or waking too early in the morning. It is a very common problem. Insomnia can lead to daytime fatigue, forgetfulness, poor concentration, irritability, anxiety, depression, and increased errors or accidents.

Insomnia can be treated successfully without relying on sleeping pills. **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia (CBT-I)** can show you how.

What is Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia (CBT-I):

- Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) is a type of counseling usually provided by a behavioral health specialist. It is a non-medication treatment for insomnia.
- CBT-I helps you change sleep behaviors that are causing insomnia. You will identify and change the thoughts and behaviors that keep you from sleeping well and learn new techniques for better sleep.
- It is the first line treatment for chronic insomnia, recommended by the American College of Physicians and others, and has been shown to be more effective than Ambien.

Benefits of CBT-I:

- Improves sleep in 75-80% of patients.
- Is more effective than sleeping pills
- Helps 90% of patients reduce or eliminate sleeping pills.
- By improving sleep, CBT-I also improves depression, pain, and other health problems.

Interested in trying CBT-I? The Overcoming Insomnia program is one option.

- The *Overcoming Insomnia Program* is a CBT-I program developed by Dr. Gregg D. Jacobs based on 30 years of research and clinical practice at the Harvard Medical School and the University of Massachusetts Medical School.
- For individuals who are, and are not, taking sleeping pills.
- Available in a “light” version that consists of basic CBT-I tips and guidelines (back of page) that is best for individuals who experience sleep problems a few nights per week or less and are not taking sleep medication.
- Available in a “full” version that is best for individuals who experience sleep problems three or more nights per week or who are taking sleeping pills. The “full” version consists of a five session, five-week PDF (workbook) program that includes weekly individualized, personalized feedback from Dr. Jacobs on CBT-I techniques.

Ten Tips for Improving Your Sleep

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| <p>1. Don't worry about getting eight hours of sleep. People who live the longest sleep 7 hours per night, and most people need between six and eight hours of sleep to function effectively during the day.</p> | <p>2. Studies show that poor sleepers underestimate how much they sleep they actually get - tell yourself you are getting more sleep than you think.</p> |
| <p>3. Your time in bed, from lights out at bedtime to the time you get out of bed in the morning, should not be more than your average sleep duration plus one hour. For example, if you sleep 6 hours on average, do not spend more than 7 hours in bed from lights out to arising time. This is the most important behavioral technique for improving your sleep!</p> | <p>4. If you do not fall asleep when you first get into bed within 20-30 minutes, go to another room and engage in a quiet, relaxing activity until you feel drowsy for 30 minutes, then return to your bed. Do the same thing every time you wake up during the night and don't fall back to sleep within 20-30 minutes. This is called the half-hour rule.</p> |
| <p>5. Allow an hour wind-down period before bedtime and make sure you feel drowsy when you turn the lights off to go to sleep.</p> | <p>6. Use the bedroom for sleep and sexual activity only. If you prefer to read or watch television in bed before lights out as a relaxation activity, limit this to 20-30 minutes.</p> |
| <p>7. Do not vary your arising times by more than half hour, including weekends, no matter how little or poorly you have slept. This will help your brain develop a consistent sleep rhythm.</p> | <p>8. Practice relaxation techniques at bedtime or if you wake up during the night including muscular relaxation, relaxing imagery, and abdominal breathing techniques.</p> |
| <p>9. Exercise by taking a brisk walk 3-6 hours before bedtime. This will improve your sleep by causing a greater rise and fall in your body temperature.</p> | <p>10. Keep your room cooler to help your body temperature fall, avoid caffeine after lunch, and avoid exposure to blue light from tablets, phones, and computers at least an hour before bed.</p> |

To learn more about CBT-I:

A video describing the *Overcoming Insomnia* program is available at <https://youtu.be/Tcx2AAECLC0> or by scanning this qr code:



Visit <http://www.umassmed.edu/psychiatry/for-patients/overcoming-insomnia/> to learn more or sign up for the *Overcoming Insomnia* program.

Face-to-face is another option for learning CBT-I. Ask your Primary Care Provider about local referral options or if you are interested in a referral to CBT-I specialist Dr. Gregg Jacobs at 508-793-4958.

UMMHC Office of Clinical Integration

October 19, 2016