

Sleep Problems



**U.S. FOOD & DRUG
ADMINISTRATION**

Basic Facts About Sleep

Most adults need 7-8 hours of sleep each night. Not everyone gets the sleep they need.

Once in a while, you may have trouble sleeping due to:

- Stress
- Health problems and medicines
- Long work hours/shift work
- Light or noise
- Drinking alcohol or eating too close to bedtime

If you have trouble falling asleep or staying asleep most nights, you may have a sleep problem called insomnia.

Some people have more serious sleep problems. Talk to your doctor if you:

- Fall asleep during the day
- Snore or make choking sounds in your sleep
- Have odd feelings in your legs or feel like you need to move your legs

Medicines to Help You Sleep

There are medicines that may help you fall asleep or stay asleep. You need a doctor's prescription for some sleep drugs. You can get other over-the-counter (OTC) medicines without a prescription.

Prescription

Prescription sleep medicines work well for many people, but they can cause serious side effects.

- Talk to your doctor about all the risks and benefits of using prescription sleep medicines.
- Sleep drugs taken for insomnia can affect your driving the morning after use.
- Sleep drugs can cause rare side effects like:
 - Severe allergic reactions
 - Severe face swelling
 - Behaviors like making phone calls, eating, having sex, or driving while you are not fully awake

Over-the-Counter (OTC)

OTC sleep drugs have side effects too. Read the "Drug Facts Label" to learn more about the side effects of your OTC sleep medicine.

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Talk to your healthcare provider if you have trouble sleeping almost every night for more than 2 weeks.

Tips for Better Sleep

Making some changes to your night time habits may help you get the sleep you need.

- Go to bed and get up at the same times each day.
- Sleep in a dark, quiet room.
- Avoid caffeine and nicotine.
- Don't drink alcohol before bedtime.
- Do something to help you relax before bedtime.
- Don't exercise before bedtime.
- Don't take a nap after 3 p.m.
- Don't eat a large meal before you go to sleep.

This fact sheet was developed by the FDA Office of Women's Health.
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