

INSOMNIA:

Our bodies restore themselves during sleep. Studies have shown that <10% of humans thrive on < 7 hours of sleep at night. 40% of women have sleep disturbances. Sleep issues increase with age.

Issues: difficulty falling asleep and/or difficulty staying asleep

Some of the results of insomnia: depression, mood disturbances, poor control of medical problems such as diabetes, day time sleepiness, weight gain, increased sensitivity to pain, difficulty thinking, brain fog

Causes: sleep apnea, restless legs, hyperarousal (wake up very easily) hormonal changes

SLEEP HYGIENE:

1. Create a night time routine to slow down. Slow down 30-60 minutes before bed, most people can't be running like crazy, hop into bed and fall asleep
 - A. Consider reading a book or magazine before bed (not on a screen).
 - B. Deep breathing exercises
 - C. Prayer or meditation
2. Try to go to bed about the same time every night, best before 10pm
3. Avoid sleeping with pets
4. Make sure the temperature is comfortable - consider 68 deg or lower, if you have night sweats, use layers. Some people are more comfortable wearing socks at night.
5. Warm shower before bed can make you sleepy and for some can make them more comfortable at night.
6. Lose excess weight: weight gain can cause breathing issues at night such as sleep apnea which limits restful sleep.
7. Avoid TV or screen time for the hour before bed, avoid bright alarm clocks- causes too much stimulation to the brain so it is harder to fall asleep.
8. White noise
9. Food: avoid sugar before bed, if you get hungry at night try a snack 1 hour before bed - protein and MUFA (healthy fat), decrease size of dinner
10. Avoid caffeine after noon
11. Minimize fluids before bed to avoid waking up to pee, go to the bathroom right before bed
12. Avoid alcohol before bed - you may fall asleep faster but sleep won't be as restful, it may increase hot flashes and night sweats
13. Exercise is helpful but not within 2 hours of going to bed
14. Avoid naps
15. Herbal tea before bed such as chamomile

HERBAL SUPPLEMENTS:

1. Melatonin - start with 1 mg before bed, if not helping after 3 nights, try 3 mg, works best if you are sleeping in pitch black room
2. Magnesium 500mg before bed (May cause diarrhea).
3. Vitamin D3 1000-2000/d
4. Valerian 200-800mg before bed, be careful because some people feel wired, can interact with many medications
5. Tryptophan 500 mg nightly
6. GABA can have a calming effect, try GABA calm from Source Naturals
7. Diphenhydramine (Benadryl) - long term use can affect thinking, can cause day time sleepiness

NON-MEDICATION INTERVENTIONS:

1. CBT: cognitive behavioral therapy
2. Acupuncture

MEDICATIONS:

There are a number of medications that can help sleep; however, some can be habit forming and some can contribute to memory loss and dementia if used long term. If medications are prescribed then followup is typically in 2-4 weeks, please call if you are having side effects or if not helping within the week. Things to monitor: sleep quality, daytime function, side effects.

1. Ambien: can affect long term thinking, may increase dementia in older adults, sleep walking
2. Hydroxyzine: can also help anxiety
3. Doxipen- 3-6 mg nightly, helps sleep onset and sleep maintenance, well tolerated in older adults, does have medication interactions
4. Ramelteon - 8 mg, better for sleep onset insomnia
5. Suvorexant: helps sleep onset and sleep maintenance, start at 10 mg, if obese start 5 mg, max 20 mg, don't use in narcolepsy
6. Lunesta: helps sleep onset and sleep maintenance, use 1-3 mg nightly, avoid high fat meals at night