

# UniversityHealthServices

*We heal. We educate. We care.*

## INSOMNIA

Most people have trouble sleeping sometimes. However, some people have trouble more often. They find it hard to fall asleep, don't sleep soundly, or wake up early and can't go back to sleep. If you do this, you have insomnia.

### **What causes insomnia?**

The most common cause of insomnia is a big change in daily routine. This type of insomnia usually doesn't last for more than a few days.

Insomnia that lasts for more than a few days may be related to a more serious problem. Chronic insomnia may result from illness that causes pain, nausea, or shortness of breath or from depression and anxiety.

### **Will insomnia go away on its own?**

Sometimes. Insomnia related to things going on in your life may go away on its own. But chronic insomnia, which may be a sign of another illness such as depression or anxiety, may require special treatment. Even if the exact cause of insomnia can't be identified, treatment for your insomnia may help.

### **What are the things that I can do that will help me sleep better?**

- Go to bed the same time each day.
- Get up at the same time each day.
- Get regular exercise each day.
- Keep the bedroom quiet, dark, and at the proper temperature.
- When you go to bed, relax your muscles beginning with your feet and working your way up toward your head.

### **What things should I avoid?**

- Don't exercise just before bed.
- Don't engage in stimulating activity just before bed.
- Avoid caffeine. Remember caffeine is present in chocolate, as well as coffee, tea, and caffeinated soda.
- Don't use alcohol to help you sleep.
- Don't lie in bed awake for more than half an hour. Instead, get up and do some quiet activity, then return to bed when you are sleepy.

### **What about sleeping pills?**

Sleeping pills are mainly used to treat the short-lasting insomnia that may occur as a result of something going on in your life. Sleeping pills that you can buy at the store are not always effective. Usually, sleeping pills can be taken for no more than two weeks, because they may actually make insomnia worse after this time.

### **Are there any precautions I should take when using sleeping pills?**

Sleeping pills cause drowsiness and poor balance, so be careful about driving and doing other activities that may be dangerous. Don't drink alcohol when taking sleeping pills.

### **Test Results and Advice Nurse**

Please call the nurse for test results and advice: 863-4463

### **Appointments**

Appointments can be made in person or by phone. If you are unable to keep your appointment, please call and cancel. Otherwise you will be charged for the visit. To schedule or cancel appointments, call: 863-0774

For more information about health care issues, visit the UHS Web site at [www.sa.psu.edu/uhs](http://www.sa.psu.edu/uhs)

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