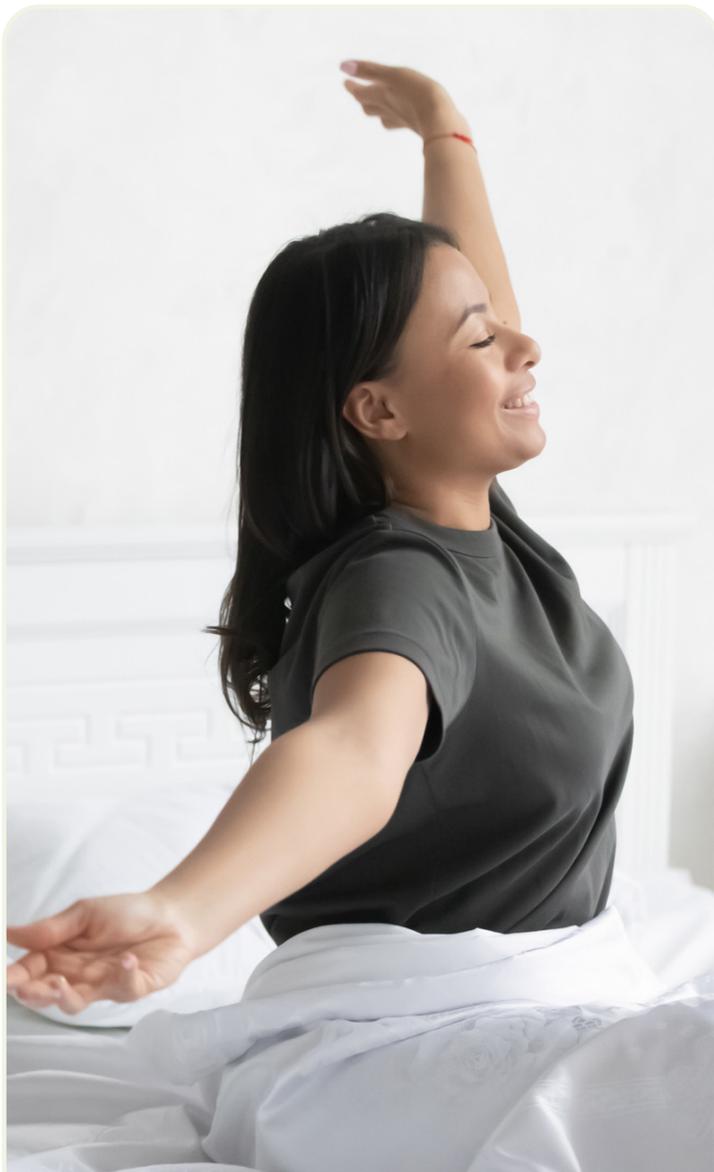




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Sleep Well

5 WAYS TO FOIL SLEEP

Many obvious things can disrupt sleep. But some sleep thieves are stealthy. Avoid these sneaky sleep robbers:



- 1. Don't eat within 3 to 4 hours of bedtime.** The sooner you go to bed after eating, the more likely you'll have heartburn and, if you have gastroesophageal reflux disease, symptoms may be severe enough to keep you tossing and turning.
- 2. Physical activity 3 hours or fewer before bedtime** can rev you up and keep you from falling asleep. However, regular exercise earlier in the day will help you sleep.
- 3. Hit the off switch.** All lights, including LED bulbs and electronic devices (e.g., phones, tablets) can confuse the brain, disrupting normal body rhythms, which can make getting to sleep even harder.
- 4. Tell your health care provider if you snore.** If you snore, you may have sleep apnea (short pauses in breathing that interfere with the deep, restful sleep cycle). Other signs of sleep apnea include gasping or choking during sleep, excessive restlessness at night or sleepiness during the day.
- 5. Skip drinking near bedtime.** Caffeinated drinks late in the day can keep you awake. And an alcoholic drink at bedtime is more likely to disrupt your slumber.

CAN'T SLEEP?

Many people experience acute (short-term) insomnia (inability to sleep). Others develop chronic insomnia for months or years, struggling to fall asleep or stay asleep despite feeling tired.

Insomnia doesn't always have a cause, although some insomnia cases are related to emotional issues — stress, anxiety and depression. Other common causes include chronic pain, restless leg syndrome, sleepwalking, allergies, acid reflux, alcohol abuse and many medications.

To gain control of insomnia, keep a detailed daily sleep diary. For 2 to 3 weeks log your hours slept, work, activities, stressful events, exercise and diet to identify potential sleep blockers. Share the results with your health care provider to find personal solutions.



Nightmares — we all have them but some have them night after night. Stress, depression and anxiety are common problems. Sleep apnea is another culprit. Counseling and medications can relieve many of them. Nightmares can also be caused by several medications, including those for pain, high blood pressure, heart disease, antihistamines and sleep problems.

If you're having regular nightmares and they're disturbing your sleep, talk to your health care provider.

— Zorba Paster, MD



QUIKQUIZ™: Sleep Aids

The challenges of today's hectic world can make falling and staying asleep a challenge. You may turn to sleep aids for help. Test your knowledge about these powerful medications:

1. If a sleep aid is available over the counter without a prescription, it's safe to take.

True False

2. The active ingredient in over-the-counter (OTC) sleep aids is the same as allergy medication.

True False

3. Natural sleep remedies are better for you than prescription sleep aids.

True False

4. You should not use sleep aids for more than 2 weeks.

True False



Answers:

1. **False** — OTC sleeping pills can cause dependency and side effects, plus some are combined with pain relievers and other medications that could be harmful to some people.

2. **True** — Most OTC sleep aids contain diphenhydramine, an antihistamine used to treat allergies. While diphenhydramine does make people drowsy, it also isn't good to take it for more than 2 weeks. It can cause daytime drowsiness, dizziness, confusion and dry mouth, and it may contribute to poorer-quality sleep.

3. **False** — While natural sleep aids may help people fall asleep, talk to your health care provider before using them. The FDA doesn't regulate supplements, so natural sleep aids may vary in terms of dosing, active ingredients, safety, effectiveness and quality.

4. **True** — Medical professionals recommend not using any sleep aid for more than 2 weeks. If your sleep problems persist, talk to your provider about treating the underlying cause of your insomnia, rather than trying a different sleeping pill.

SNORING IS SERIOUS BUSINESS

Snoring occurs when relaxed tissues in your throat vibrate as you breathe during sleep. It can annoy and keep your partner awake, but snoring can also disrupt your sleep, causing fatigue and raising the risk of stroke, heart failure, irregular heartbeats, heart attack and hypertension.



Nasal polyps, enlarged tonsils and a stuffy nose can cause snoring. Drinking alcohol before bed and simply growing older, too, can cause tongue and throat muscles to relax, resulting in snoring. But sleep apnea, marked by breathing that stops briefly and repeatedly during sleep, is the most serious condition linked to snoring.

Sleep apnea causes choking noises and snoring during sleep because your airway is narrowed, often from excess weight. Your brain perceives breathing difficulty and wakes you up, often many times an hour. The result can be morning headaches, irritability, forgetfulness, behavior or mood changes, anxiety and depression.

If you have these symptoms, talk to your health care provider. Treatment includes lifestyle changes, weight loss and a continuous positive air pressure (CPAP) machine.

What is Nocturia?

Nocturia is waking up more than once while sleeping to go to the bathroom. About 1 in 3 adults older than 30 has nocturia, and the rate increases with age.

Nocturia results from lifestyle habits or health conditions.

Drinking too much liquid before bedtime is a common cause. Diuretics, seizure drugs and other medications can cause nocturia. So can insomnia and sleep apnea. Other health conditions linked to nocturia include overactive bladder, diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure and menopause.

See your health care provider if you have signs of nocturia.

Treatment may include taking prescription medicine, physical therapy and often lifestyle changes. — Elizabeth Smoots, MD

