

Insomnia



What is insomnia?

Insomnia is a condition also known as sleeplessness. Struggling to sleep is a lot more common than people think. When our bodies get stressed or worried our brains try to keep us awake so that we can deal with the problem - even if it's something we can't actually fix! There is also medical reason as to why you might not be able to sleep, such as being deficient in melatonin. Below are some suggestions of things you can do to try and help you sleep. However, if doing these things doesn't help then you should contact your GP.

Sleep is one of the most important aspects of our lives and shouldn't be underestimated. Sleep deprivation is very harmful to your ability to learn and grow. The recommended amount of sleep for teenagers is 8-10 hours!

Keep regular sleep hours:

It may sound very simple, but going to bed at a fixed time each night and setting an alarm to wake up on time (even at the weekend) will help your body clock know when it is time for you to sleep.

Create a relaxing environment:

Make sure that your bedroom is dark, quiet and cool. These factors can really help you get to sleep and stay asleep.

Go Offline:

Do you lie in bed on your phone for hours before drifting off to sleep? You are not alone! Using your phone in bed keeps your brain occupied so that it can't focus on winding down or relaxing. The best thing you can do is charge your phone overnight in a different room, it'll still be there in the morning. There's also no excuse saying you're using it for your alarm - get yourself a clock instead!

Confront Sleeplessness:

If trying to sleep isn't working, try getting up and doing something else for a while. Avoid screens however, as they will keep you awake. Try reading in low level lighting or maybe yoga. If the reason you can't sleep is because you're worried about something, try writing about it. Journaling can be very comforting and help relax your body into feeling it's okay to go to sleep.

Exercise:

Our bodies store lots of energy and want to use it up. If you haven't gotten your heart rate up enough during the day it's possible that your body will refuse to sleep because it feels it needs to move more. If you get restless in the evening, fidgety or agitated. Try doing some high intensity exercise to burn off your excess energy for the day.

Be conscious of what you eat and drink:

A couple hours before you plan to go to bed you should make an effort to avoid foods that contain a lot of sugar. They will give your body a bunch of energy at a time when it's too late in the day to really burn it off, so instead it'll just keep you awake. Avoid sugary and caffeinated drinks too, such as fizzy drinks, tea and coffee.

Where to go for more information

This is only a small selection of things you can do to help yourself get to sleep. Here are a couple of websites which have a lot more information on insomnia and the importance of sleep. Remember, if you still can't sleep after trying these tips out, be sure to see your GP.

www.sleepfoundation.org

www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/sleep

Talk to someone that you can trust:

People who care about you can offer the support you need. This could include parents, carers, family, friends, teachers, the school nurse, youth workers or a Doctor/your GP

Helplines and services available:

Samaritans www.samaritans.org Freephone (UK and Republic of Ireland): 116 123 (24 hours)

Childline www.childline.org.uk Freephone 24h helpline: 0800 1111

Kooth: Free, safe and anonymous online support for young people www.kooth.com

Shout: Free 24/7 text service for anyone in crisis www.giveusashout.org Text 85258

The Mix: Free information and support for under 25s in the UK 0808 808 4994 www.themix.org.uk