



## HANDY FACT SHEET INSOMNIA & SLEEP HYGIENE



### 1. Understanding Insomnia

Insomnia is a sleep disorder that affects millions worldwide. It can make it difficult to fall asleep at night, wake up frequently during sleep, or leave you feeling unrefreshed in the morning. The result is often fatigue, irritability, and difficulty concentrating during the day. Chronic insomnia can also increase the risk of long-term health problems, including cardiovascular issues, depression, and weakened immunity.

#### Additional Notes:

- Sleep is not just rest; it allows the body to repair tissues, regulate hormones, and restore energy for the next day.
- Short-term insomnia is often triggered by stress or sudden life changes, while chronic insomnia persists for weeks or months.





## 2. Recognizing Insomnia in Yourself

The amount of sleep each person needs varies. Some people feel fully rested after just 4 hours, while others need up to 10 hours. The key measure is how alert and refreshed you feel during the day, rather than counting hours of sleep.

Signs that you may have insomnia include:

- Difficulty falling asleep even when tired.
- Waking multiple times during the night.
- Feeling groggy, unrefreshed, or sleepy during the day.
- Dependence on caffeine or naps to cope with tiredness.

### Additional Notes:

- Insomnia is more common among older adults and women.
- Monitoring your daytime alertness is a more accurate indicator than sleep duration alone.

## 3. Why Sleep Hygiene is Important

Sleep hygiene refers to a collection of habits and environmental adjustments that improve your chances of falling asleep naturally and staying asleep. Good sleep hygiene promotes restorative sleep without relying on medications or stimulants.

### Examples of benefits:

- Helps maintain energy levels throughout the day.
- Improves mood and reduces stress.
- Supports physical and mental health.





## 4. Common Causes of Poor Sleep

Insomnia is often a symptom rather than a disease itself. Many factors can interfere with sleep:

### Mental Health Conditions:

Anxiety, depression, stress, and PTSD can trigger insomnia.

### Substances and Medications:

Caffeine, nicotine, alcohol, and certain prescription drugs (e.g., for heart disease, asthma, or pain) can disrupt sleep.

### Physical Conditions:

Pain, restless legs, breathing difficulties, hormonal changes, incontinence, or gastrointestinal problems.

### Environmental Factors:

Noise, light, temperature, and uncomfortable bedding.

Life Stressors: Work pressure, financial worries, and personal concerns.





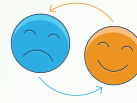
Memory Issues



Heart Disease



Accident Risk



Mood Changes



Poor Balance



Weight Gain

## 5. Effects of Sleep Loss

Lack of sleep can have serious consequences if it continues for more than a week. Poor sleep affects mood, cognitive performance, and physical health.

### Common effects include:

- Daytime fatigue and lack of concentration.
- Irritability, anxiety, or depression.
- Greater likelihood of accidents or mistakes.
- Reliance on stimulants, alcohol, or drugs to cope.



High Blood Pressure



Weakened Immunity



## 6. Sleep Hygiene: Practical Tips for Better Sleep

Improving sleep hygiene can help you fall asleep naturally and stay asleep.

**Tips include:**

### 1. Limit stimulants:

Avoid caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol 4–6 hours before bedtime. Caffeine is found in tea, coffee, colas, and chocolate. Alcohol may help you fall asleep but fragments your sleep, causing unrefreshing rest. Nicotine acts as a stimulant but can help some people relax temporarily.

### 2. Stick to a regular schedule:

Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day, even on weekends. This strengthens your body's internal clock.

### 3. Create a comfortable sleep environment:

A dark, quiet, and slightly cool bedroom with comfortable bedding improves sleep. Small adjustments like warm hands and feet or lavender scent may help.

### 4. Limit screen exposure before bed:

Avoid backlit screens for at least one hour before sleep. Blue light from phones, computers, and TVs suppresses melatonin, the sleep hormone.

### 5. Avoid long daytime naps:

Keep naps short (20–30 minutes) and avoid lying around during the day to encourage nighttime sleepiness.

### 6. Relax before bedtime:

Gentle stretching, a warm bath, or meditation can help your body wind down. Avoid heavy exercise or mentally stimulating activities within two hours of sleep.

### 7. Maintain daylight exposure and activity:

Exposure to natural light during the day and moderate exercise improves sleep quality.

### 8. Mind your evening meals:

Light carbohydrates, like pasta, can help sleep, but avoid large meals, sugar, or vitamin tablets just before bed.





## 8. Quick Sleep Tips

Simple daily habits reinforce good sleep:

- Reserve your bed for sleep only—avoid watching TV or working in bed.
- Keep evenings calm; avoid stressful or stimulating activities.
- Consider soothing aids like lavender scent or soft background music.
- Wake up at the same time every day to maintain your body clock.



This guide will help you understand more about sleep, insomnia, and healthy sleep habits. For detailed information on these topics and many others—including driving safety, women's health, how medicines work, dosages, and various medical conditions—please visit our website:

<https://diversemindscclinic.co.uk/>



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