

## Help is available

Aspirus Employee Assistance Services has counselors available to help you and your family. You can call the confidential helpline 24 hours a day at:

800.236.4457  
TDD# 715.845.4928

Remember,  
Aspirus Employee  
Assistance Services  
is confidential.

## having trouble getting to sleep after going to bed? (continued...)

serious sleep disorder is suspected (such as sleep apnea or restless leg syndrome), consult your doctor.

If you or a family member would like help developing “insomnia-busting” skills, call Aspirus Employee Assistance Services. You will sleep better knowing you did.



tips to help you sleep better



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*Do you often have difficulty falling asleep? Do you wake up too early? Do you awaken frequently and then have difficulty falling back to sleep? Do you feel tired when you wake up?*

*Insomnia, or sleeplessness, can be the result of many factors including excessive stress, health problems, too much caffeine or alcohol close to bedtime, or simply an uncomfortable sleeping area. On the average, one-third of our life is spent sleeping. This is when we recharge our minds and bodies.*

*Most people need seven to nine hours of sleep per night. Fatigue and lack of energy during the day may be an indication of a sleep problem.*

*While there are many varieties of sleep problems, insomnia is the most common and easiest to treat - often with simple self-care techniques.*

## there are three types of insomnia

**Transient:** A brief period of sleeplessness due to a minor stressful event or a change in normal sleeping schedule (as in jet lag or shift work).

**Occasional:** A period of sleeplessness of less than three weeks associated with acute life stress.

**Chronic:** Sleeplessness of more than three weeks' duration (often due to an underlying health problem).

Chronic insomnia should be discussed with a doctor, but transient or occasional insomnia can often be treated through self-care. Try some or all of the following strategies to improve the quality of your sleep:

- Maintain a consistent sleep schedule, getting up and retiring at the same time each day including weekends.
- Avoid long naps (over 15 minutes).
- Exercise regularly, although not within two hours of bedtime.
- Avoid caffeine within four to six hours of bedtime.
- Be aware of the possible sleep-inhibiting effects of some medications.
- Control your stress level.
- Control your sleeping environment (temperature, lighting, noise level, bedding) to maintain maximum comfort. Avoid reading, eating, or watching TV in bed.
- Avoid alcohol, nicotine, or snacks close to bedtime.
- Schedule some “downtime” before bed: take a warm bath, practice a relaxation exercise, read something relaxing or listen to soothing music.

## having trouble getting to sleep after going to bed?

- Try visualization. Imagine yourself somewhere that you find extremely relaxing. Experience the sights, sounds and sensations as if you were there.
- Do a progressive muscle relaxation exercise. Tighten and relax various muscle groups as you work your way from head to toe.
- If a specific thought or worry is keeping you awake, write it down on a bedside notepad to follow up on the next day. If you are wondering whether you turned off the stove or locked the back door, stop wondering! Get up and check it out.
- If you do not feel drowsy in 20 to 30 minutes, get out of bed. Relax in a comfortable chair. When you start feeling sleepy, try the bed again.
- Do not try to force sleep. Telling yourself that your day will be ruined if you do not get enough sleep will only wake you up more. Relax! Sleep can be allowed, but not forced.

Lack of quality sleep over a period of time can jeopardize your overall health and affect your performance and quality of life. Transient or occasional insomnia can often be resolved by employing the techniques described above. However, if insomnia becomes chronic, or a more