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Information & Support



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SLEEP PROBLEMS

Sleep problems affect all of us. Whether they are occasional sleep difficulties or chronic cases of insomnia, they negatively affect our mental and physical health. People suffering from insomnia often have difficulty falling asleep and staying asleep. This in turn – if not addressed – can lead to irritability, reduced cognitive abilities, anxiety, depression and other health problems.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF INSOMNIA

Insomnia is a complex problem and is customarily divided into **primary** insomnia, occurring spontaneously with no apparent cause, and **secondary** insomnia, i.e. caused by another illness or interfering factor (disease, physical condition, etc.). It can also be classified on the basis of duration as **acute** (short-term) or **chronic** (long-term). It may occur for a period of time, cease and then reappear.

Acute insomnia includes problems falling asleep or maintaining sleep for at least three days a week for a period of one week to three months. It is usually caused by the following factors:

- stress at home and/or work
- stress in personal or professional relationships
- physical trauma
- environmental changes caused by light, noise or temperature
- acute pain
- a traumatic event such as a loss.

The second type is persistent insomnia, often referred to as chronic insomnia. It occurs several times a week and persists for a long time – months or even years. This type of insomnia can result from a variety of factors, including health problems, mental disorders or poor sleep habits.

The third type is recurrent insomnia, which involves cyclical periods of insomnia, usually lasting several days or weeks. To speak of such insomnia there must be at least two such episodes per year.

Differentiating insomnia is important in the diagnosis and treatment process, as it enables doctors and psychologists to focus on specific aspects that affect a person's sleep quality.



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Would you like to learn more about sleep? We recommend reading the book by Matthew Walker [*Why we sleep. The new science of sleep and dreams*](#)

SYMPTOMS OF INSOMNIA

Typical symptoms of all types of insomnia include:

- a long time required to fall asleep
- a feeling of sleeplessness upon waking up
- fatigue or daytime sleepiness
- problems with attention, remembering or concentration
- inability to function normally at work or school
- irritability, nervousness
- worrying about lack of sleep
- waking up too early in the morning.

METHODS OF DEALING WITH INSOMNIA

It is important to pay attention to your sleep habits and seek help if sleep problems persist over a long period of time. It is worth remembering that regular exercise can help to improve the quality of sleep, but avoid heavy exercise right before bedtime. It is important to remember that avoiding caffeine and alcohol before going to bed can reduce difficulties with falling asleep. If you have chronic sleep problems, it is important to consult your doctor to determine the best treatment plan.

It is also worth paying attention to the environment in which you sleep – ideally the bedroom should be dark, quiet and cool, and a comfortable bed is important too. These factors can significantly affect the quality of sleep and help alleviate sleep-related problems. In addition, regular bedtimes and a routine before going to bed can help regulate the sleep cycle and improve the quality of sleep.

Diet is an important factor, as certain foods can make it difficult to fall asleep. It is advisable to avoid heavy meals before bedtime. In addition, relaxation techniques can make it easier to fall asleep as they help to reduce stress. It is therefore worth experimenting with different methods to find the ones that work best. It is also important to take care of so-called digital hygiene, as avoiding the blue light emitted by electronic devices before bedtime can also have a beneficial effect on falling asleep and the quality of sleep.

Fortunately, many cases of insomnia, regardless of severity, are quite easily treated. Self-help methods such as improved sleep hygiene or relaxation techniques can be effective in most mild to moderate cases. In more advanced or chronic cases, a specific form of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) aimed at treating insomnia may be advisable. It is worth remembering that this ailment is common, easily diagnosed and very treatable. Do not underestimate sleep problems – it is often a signal of other mental and/or physical health difficulties. It is important to pay attention to the signals coming from the body and, if the problem persists, see a specialist for help.

Don't wait, call us! If you have sleep problems, contact a specialist. We are here to support you!