

Insomnia is defined as difficulty initiating, or maintaining sleep at least 3 nights per week, in addition to complaints of sleep-related daytime impairment. Sufficient and restful sleep is a human necessity. The average adult needs slightly more than 8 hours of sleep a day, but only 35% of American adults consistently get this amount of rest.

People with insomnia tend to experience one or more of the following sleep disturbances:

- Difficulty falling asleep at night
- Waking too early in the morning
- Waking frequently throughout the night
- Sleep that is chronically nonrestorative or poor

Insomnia may stem from a disruption of the body's circadian rhythm, an internal clock that governs the timing of hormone production, sleep, body temperature, and other functions. While occasional restless nights are normal, prolonged insomnia can interfere with daytime function, concentration, and memory.

Insomnia increases the risk of substance abuse, motor vehicle accidents, headaches, and depression.

Signs and Symptoms:

- Signs of insomnia may include:
- Not feeling refreshed after sleep
- Inability to sleep despite being tired
- Daytime drowsiness, fatigue, irritability, difficulty concentrating, and impaired ability to perform normal activities
- Anxiety as bedtime approaches
- Tension headaches

Causes

No known physical or mental condition causes primary insomnia, although doctors suspect it may stem from a disruption of the body's circadian rhythm, an internal clock that governs the timing of hormone production, sleep, body temperature, and other functions. Everyday anxiety and stress, coffee, and alcohol are the most common culprits.