

# COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY FOR INSOMNIA (CBT-I)

## Quick Facts:

**Insomnia is a common sleep disorder. It involves having trouble falling asleep or staying asleep. Chronic insomnia occurs when you have trouble sleeping at least three times per week for at least three months. Cognitive behavioral therapy for insomnia (CBT-I) is an effective treatment. It involves a variety of strategies that target the cause of your problem. CBT-I helps you change actions or thoughts that hurt your ability to sleep well. The positive effects of CBT-I can be long-lasting.**

## KEY POINTS:

- CBT-I is an effective treatment for chronic insomnia.
- It addresses the thoughts and behaviors that keep you from sleeping well.
- CBT-I helps you learn new strategies to sleep better.
- It can be provided by a behavioral sleep medicine specialist during a series of individual or group therapy sessions.
- Studies also show that some online CBT-I programs can be effective.



*How Can I Learn More?*

- **Talk to your board-certified sleep medicine physician.**

## Am I At Risk:

**Common causes of insomnia include stress, pain, depression, anxiety and other sleep disorders. Insomnia also can result from bad sleep habits such as daytime napping or using electronic devices in bed. Medications can cause insomnia as a side-effect. Substances such as caffeine, alcohol and tobacco also can disrupt your sleep.**

## GENERAL OVERVIEW:

**CBT-I involves a variety of strategies that may help improve your sleep:**

***Stimulus control* teaches you to reserve your bed for sleeping. It also helps you develop a consistent sleep schedule.**

***Relaxation training* helps you reduce your tension and relax your body. It also helps you avoid negative thoughts that interfere with sleep.**

***Sleep restriction* reduces your time in bed to help eliminate tossing and turning.**

***Paradoxical intention* teaches you to avoid trying too hard to fall asleep.**

***Biofeedback* teaches you to relax by controlling body signals such as breathing and heart rate.**

***Cognitive therapy* helps you change your beliefs and attitudes about insomnia.**

***Sleep hygiene education* is a behavioral strategy. It helps you develop healthy sleep habits. It also teaches you to create a relaxing sleep environment.**

## TIPS:

- Avoid caffeine in the late afternoon and evening.
- Turn off electronic devices at least 30 minutes before bedtime.
- Ensure that your bedroom is dark, quiet and comfortably cool.
- Establish a relaxing bedtime routine.
- Don't go to bed unless you are sleepy.
- If you don't fall asleep after 20 minutes, get out of bed.
- Keep a consistent sleep schedule by getting up at the same time every day, even on weekends.



## Next Steps:

- Develop healthy sleep habits and follow a relaxing bedtime routine.
- Create a soothing bedroom environment.
- Talk with your doctor about all options for treating insomnia.
- Your doctor may refer you to a behavioral sleep medicine specialist for help.

### Questions For Your Physician



**Take a few minutes to write your questions for the next time you see your healthcare provider.**

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### Sample Questions:



*Why do I feel tired all the time?*

*Why do I wake up so early in the morning?*

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DEVELOPED BY THE  
AMERICAN ACADEMY  
OF SLEEP MEDICINE

