
The Beacon

Guiding You through the Process of Change

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To Sleep, Perchance to Dream

“Sleep is such a luxury, which I can’t afford.”
Robin Sikarwar

“The best cure for insomnia is to get a lot of sleep.” W.C. Fields

Do you have trouble sleeping? Does it seem like it takes you forever to fall asleep at night? Do you wake up many times in the middle of the night, or just once and it takes you a long time to fall back to sleep? Do you wake up too early in the morning and can’t go back to sleep? *Are you just plain tired of being so tired?*

You are not alone. There is a general consensus among sleep experts across several countries that 30% of adults endorse some type of sleep difficulty, either difficulty falling asleep, maintaining sleep, waking up too early or having poor sleep quality (Ancoli-Israel and Roth, 1999). Many people experience short-term and infrequent insomnia over the course of their lives, often in response to stress, illness or schedule changes (such as shift work). Others experience sleep problems that are more lasting and cause them to have difficulty functioning during the day and/or distress at not being able to sleep when everyone else seems to do so easily.

Insomnia can be very disruptive to an individual’s daily life. “Compared with good sleepers, people with persistent sleep disturbances are more prone to accidents, have higher rates of work absenteeism, diminished job performance, decreased quality of life, and increased health care utilization” (Roth, 2007). In addition, there are several risk factors associated with insomnia. These include being older, being female, and having co-occurring medical and psychiatric conditions. “Approximately 40% of adults with insomnia also have a diagnosable psychiatric disorder—most notably depression. A comorbid psychiatric disorder such as depression

or anxiety may be a consequence of—as well as a risk factor for—disrupted sleep” (Roth, 2007).

There are several options for treating insomnia. Behavior and lifestyle changes, including relaxation exercises, watching your diet, getting exercise, refraining from napping and limiting evening screen time, can improve the overall quality of your sleep. Cognitive therapy can help promote positive thinking, as negative thinking often contributes significantly to sleep disruption. The advantage of the above methods is that they can produce positive, lasting improvement without the use of medication. If your physician recommends medication, it usually is intended only for a short period of time or once in a while. While they can help improve sleep, they also can produce side-effects, such as anxiety, nausea or high blood pressure, and can lose effectiveness over time.

If you or someone you know is struggling with insomnia, don’t despair. Help is available. Beacon Behavioral Services’ R.E.S.T. (Restore Effective Sleep Today) Program can help evaluate and treat your insomnia. Our experienced clinical staff can provide assistance to individual children, adolescents or adults who are experiencing disrupted sleep. For more information, please contact Sandra Pelletier at (860) 676-9350 x27.

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Roth, T. Insomnia: Definition, Prevalence, Etiology, and Consequences. J Clin Sleep Med. 2007 August 15; 3(5 Suppl): S7–S10. [PubMed]

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