



Insomnia: What to do when you can't sleep

"Help, I can't sleep!" This is a common problem we see patients for in the office every week. Almost everyone has had trouble falling asleep or staying asleep at some point in time, but up to 35% of adults struggle with insomnia and have persistent problems falling sleep, staying asleep or waking up too early.

Lack of sleep is associated with a number of health issues, including diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, obesity and depression. Poor sleep can also affect your memory and alertness, and increase risk for motor vehicle accidents.

If you are persistently struggling with sleep, see your doctor to discuss and look for any underlying medical problems that may be causing or exacerbating the issue.

For Instance:

- Depression and anxiety interfere with falling asleep or may cause frequent waking.
- For women, hot flashes during menopause and perimenopause can disrupt sleep.
- Sleep apnea is an underdiagnosed disorder that may cause frequent waking with snoring, gasping for air or choking at night due to decreased oxygen delivery. This disorder can also lead to people sleeping longer than usual, but still not waking up feeling rested.
- Waking up needing to urinate at night becomes more common in both men and women with age, so talking to your doctor can help evaluate medical causes and possible treatment.
- Some medications can disrupt sleep so reviewing these with your physician can be helpful as well.

Good sleep hygiene is the first step for conquering insomnia. This includes the following:

- Keep a consistent sleep schedule, getting up at the same time every day and going to bed at the same time, even on weekend or vacations, no matter how long you have slept for.
- Establish a relaxing bedtime routine. NO screens in bed (TV/laptop/phone), and put away electronics at least 30 minutes before bedtime. If you do read before bed or when waking up at night, ok to use a reader like a Kindle which is not back-lit.
- No reading in bed, read outside the bed and then get in bed only when its time to sleep
- If you don't fall asleep after 20 minutes, get out of bed and do a quiet (NON-SCREEN) activity without a lot of light exposure, for 10 minutes and then try going to bed again

- Keep the bedroom dark and quiet (partners snoring or noisy pets can disrupt sleep also!)
- Avoid large meals and heavy exercise before bed.
- Regular exercise during the day will help with sleep
- Avoid caffeine any time after late afternoon
- Alcohol is a sedative, but leads to sleep disruptions and poor quality sleep, so avoid drinking after dinner.
- Limit water consumption before bed to decrease the chances of needing to wake up to urinate
- Avoid caffeine any time after 2pm.
- Alcohol is a sedative, but leads to sleep disruptions and poor quality sleep, so avoid drinking, especially after dinner.
- Avoid napping during the day even if you are tired since this can interfere with nighttime sleep. If you need to nap, set an alarm to nap for less than 30 minutes.

If these measures are not enough, CBT-I, cognitive behavioral therapy for insomnia, has proven to be a beneficial treatment for insomnia. It is as effective as sleep medications in the short term and more effective in the long term, while avoiding the side effects of sleep aids.

In addition to improving sleep hygiene, CBT-I focuses on addressing anxieties and negative thoughts about sleep. However, finding someone who specializes in CBT-I can be difficult as there are a limited number of practitioners, so there is a lot of interest in online programs to make this available to a larger number of patients.

Here are several resources for online CBT-I.

-The Insomnia Coach is a free app created by the VA

<https://mobile.va.gov/app/insomnia-coach>

-There is an online 5 week program at cbtforinsomnia.com, developed by a behavioral sleep medicine specialist, for \$50-70 depending on the level of support offered.

-Sleepio.com is another online/app-based program covered by some insurers and employers.

There are many over the counter medications and supplements advertised for insomnia treatment, but you should talk to your doctor about these before using, due to the potential for interactions and side effects. In addition there are prescription sleep medications for chronic insomnia which may be helpful for some people, your doctor can discuss these as well.



Preferred Health Partners

Healthy Habits

Orange Glazed Salmon with Confetti Chickpeas

(Adapted from Joy Bauer's Simple Food Remedies)

Ingredients

Glaze-

- 1 ¼ cup fresh orange juice, divided
- 2 chamomile tea bags
- 1 Tbsp arrowroot starch
- 1 tsp orange zest
- ½ Tbsp chopped fresh thyme (or ¼ Tbsp dried thyme)
- 1 Tbsp honey
- ¼ tsp salt

Salmon-

- 4 Salmon filets, ~5-6oz each
- 2-3 Tbsp avocado oil
- ½ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp pepper

Confetti-

- 2Tbsp avocado oil
- 1 yellow onion, diced
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 red bell pepper, diced
- 2 medium carrots, diced
- 2 medium zucchini, diced
- 1 15-ounce can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 1Tbsp fresh thyme (or 1tsp dried thyme)
- ¾ tsp paprika
- ¾ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp pepper or more to taste
- ½ tsp red pepper flakes

Directions

Glaze-

1. In a small saucepan boil 1 cup orange juice, once boiling add chamomile tea bags and reduce heat to a simmer. After 5 minutes remove the tea bags and discard.
2. In a small bowl mix remaining ¼ cup orange juice and arrowroot starch. Once completely mixed add to the heated orange juice along with zest, thyme, and honey.
3. Stir all ingredients to combine and increase heat to medium high and cook until the sauce thickens stirring frequently for about 5 minutes. Then remove from heat and stir in salt.

Salmon-

1. Season salmon with salt and pepper
2. In a large skillet heat avocado oil to medium high heat. Once oil is shimmering add salmon skin side down and cook for 4 minutes then flip and cook for an addition 5 minutes.

Confetti-

1. In a large skillet heat avocado oil to medium heat. Sauté onion until translucent, then add garlic and cook for ~30 seconds.
2. Then add remaining ingredients, stirring occasionally until vegetables have browned for ~10min

To assemble- Scoop generous portion of confetti onto plate and place salmon on top and spoon over orange glaze and enjoy!

Locations

Austin

1305 W. 34th St. Suite 204
Austin, Texas 78705
737-285-3770

Dallas - Gaston

3417 Gaston Ave. Suite 700
Dallas, TX 75246
214-823-4800

Dallas - Junius

3900 Junius St. Suite 415
Dallas, TX 75246
972-993-8300

Frisco

3535 Victory Group Way Suite 330
Frisco, TX 75034
972-993-5070

Las Colinas

440 W. I-635 Suite 405
Irving, TX 75063
972-993-5080

Park Cities

8215 Westchester Dr. Suite 320
Dallas, TX 75225
972-993-5040

Plano

4708 Dexter Dr. Suite 400
Plano, TX 75093
972-993-5050

Walnut Hill

8144 Walnut Hill Suite 360
Dallas, TX 75231
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