



Insomnia - Sleep Disorder

One of the most common sleep disorders preventing people from getting the proper amount of sleep is insomnia, which has many known causes. Approximately 30 percent of Americans are affected by some form of insomnia.

The specialists at the Diagnostic Sleep Center of LaPorte Regional Health System are experienced in the diagnosis and treatment options for insomnia.

What is Insomnia?

Insomnia is a sleep disorder that results in inadequate quantity or poor quality of sleep. It is characterized by one or more of the following symptoms:

- ▶ Difficulty falling asleep
- ▶ Waking up frequently during the night, and having difficulty getting back to sleep
- ▶ Waking up too early in the morning
- ▶ Sleep that is not refreshing or restful

Insomnia is defined by the quality of sleep—not necessarily by the number of hours of sleep or how long it takes to fall asleep. Some people can be affected by short-term or intermittent insomnia that can last from one night up to four weeks, while others are affected by chronic insomnia that can occur most every night.

How Insomnia Affects People

The causes of insomnia can be related to medical illness, psychiatric condition, or lifestyle. Insomnia occurs more frequently in individuals over age 60, affects more women than men, and those who have a history of depression. People with insomnia can experience tiredness, lack of energy, difficulty concentrating and irritability during the day.

Short-term and intermittent insomnia generally occur in people who experience one or more of the following:

- ▶ Stress
- ▶ Environmental noise
- ▶ Extreme temperatures
- ▶ Change in surrounding environment
- ▶ Sleep schedule problems due to jet lag or other factors
- ▶ Medication side effects

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Chronic insomnia is more complex, and often results from a combination of factors. One of the most common causes is depression. Other underlying causes include arthritis, kidney disease, heart failure, asthma, sleep apnea, narcolepsy, periodic limb movement disorder (PLMD)/restless leg syndrome (RLS), Parkinson's disease and hyperthyroidism. Chronic insomnia can be caused by behavioral factors such as the misuse of caffeine, alcohol or other substances; disrupted sleep-wake cycles; or chronic stress.

Prevention And Treatment

Treatment for insomnia at the Diagnostic Sleep Center is tailored to each individual based on medical history, a physical and/or psychological assessment. Physical and behavioral problems that worsen insomnia should be reduced or eliminated. Healthcare providers may prescribe a sleep medication for short-term or intermittent insomnia. People with chronic insomnia can use different techniques to help improve sleep such as:

- ▶ Relaxation therapy — Techniques designed to reduce or eliminate anxiety and body tension.
- ▶ Sleep restriction — A program that allows a few hours of sleep during the night for those people who spend too much time in bed trying to get to sleep. Gradually, the time is increased until the person experiences a more normal night's sleep.
- ▶ Reconditioning — Behavioral changes that recondition a person to associate the bed and bedtime with sleep.

The Wellness Resource Center at The Crossing of La Porte Hospital has alternative therapy items available, and a nurse certified in holistic nursing to provide consultations on products that may assist with relaxation therapy, such as guided imagery CDs, gentle yoga and aromatherapy. For more information, call (219) 326-2480.

For more information, contact the Diagnostic Sleep Center of La Porte Regional Health System at (219) 326-2377 or visit www.laportehhealth.org.



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