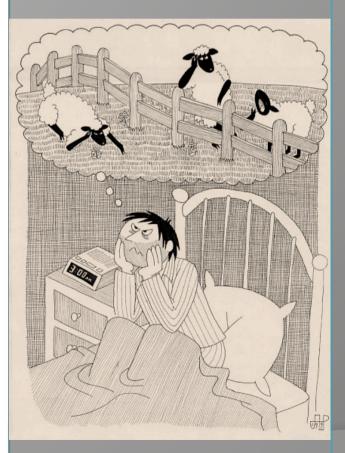
## Escape from...

# **INSOMNIA!!**

Have you counted sheep until sunrise? Have hard time on the bed falling asleep? You have an occasional problem with i nsomnia, but don't worry. Check this out and improve your sleep quality!

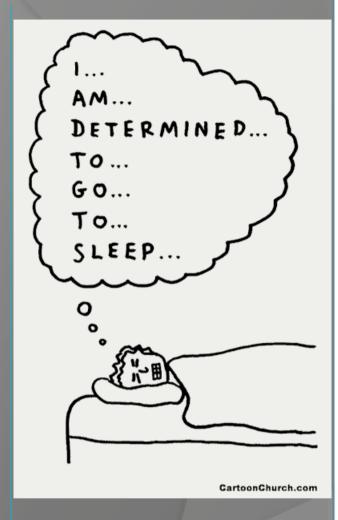


## SLEEP HYGIENE

Sleep hygiene is one of the compone nts of behavioral therapy for insomnia. Several simple steps can be taken to i mprove a patient's sleep quality and qu antity. These steps include:

- Sleep as much as you need to feel re sted; do not oversleep.
- Exercise regularly at least 20 minutes daily, ideally 4-5 hours before your bedt ime
- Avoid forcing yourself to sleep.
- Keep a regular sleep and awakening schedule.
- Do not drink caffeinated beverages lat er than the afternoon (tea, coffee, soft d rinks etc.)
- Avoid "night caps," (alcoholic drinks pr ior to going to bed).
- Do not smoke, especially in the evening.
- Do not go to bed hungry.
- Adjust the environment in the room (lights, temperature, noise, etc.)
- Do not go to bed with your worries; try to resolve them before going to bed.

(http://www.emedicinehealth.com)



### Insomnia may threaten you...

- Poor concentration and focus
- Difficulty with memory
- Impaired motor coordination
- Irritability and impaired social interaction
- Motor vehicle accidents because of fatig ued, sleep-deprived drivers

What is insomnia, and is it prevalent? Insomnia simply means difficulty sleepin g. It is among the most prevalent psycho logical health problems, with at least 1 in 10 people suffering from insomnia chro nically (Tang & Harvey, 2006). In fact, H amilton et al. states large-sample survey s have suggested that between 13% and 52% of those surveyed report at least occasional problems with insomnia.

#### What is the cause?

A review of the literature on insomnia su ggests that the cause and course of inso mnia are highly variable. Although many people experience primary sleep disorde rs, sleep disturbances are a common sid e effect of many medications (e.g., SSRI antidepressants, decongestants); are re lated to use of many psychoactive subst ances (e.g., alcohol, tobacco, caffeine); and are included in the symptom profiles of many anxiety and mood disorders. O ccasional or acute episodes of insomnia are often related to environmental stress ors (such as noisy neighbors), job stress , or personal stressors, such as divorce or bereavement. In contrast, clinically si gnificant insomnia lasts for at least 1 mo nth and causes significant distress and i mpairment (Hamilton et al., 2007).

#### Is it serious?

Insomnia has serious consequences, inc luding impaired cognitive function, functional impairment, work absenteeism, increased use of medical services, and doubling the risk of accident. In the United States, the direct and indirect costs associated with insomnia were conservatively estimated to be between \$92.5 and \$107.5 billion per year (Tang & Harvey, 2006).

#### **Treatment**

The main focus of treatment for insomnia a should be directed towards finding the cause. Once a cause is identified, it is important to manage and control the underlying problem, as this alone may eliminate the insomnia. Treating the symptoms of insomnia without addressing the main cause is rarely successful.

## Insomnia from jet lag

Behavioral and short-term drug therapy has been used.

- If you can anticipate a trip, begin to shif t your bedtime to coincide with the time schedule in your destination.
- Short-acting tranquilizers have been shown to be useful.
- Melatonin, a hormone secreted by the pineal gland that regulates our sleep-wa ke cycles, has also been used.

#### Stimulus control

Stimulus control therapy also consists of a few simple steps that may help pa tients with chronic insomnia.

- Go to bed when you feel sleepy.
- Do not watch TV, read, eat, or worry i n bed. Your bed should be used only f or sleep and sexual activity.
- If you do not fall asleep 30 minutes a fter going to bed, get up and go to ano ther room and resume your relaxation techniques.
- Set your alarm clock to get up at a c ertain time each morning, even on we ekends.
- Do not over-sleep.
- Avoid taking long naps in the daytim
  e.

