

SLEEP AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH

Quick Facts:

Healthy sleep helps to regulate your mood and emotional health. Sleep problems often occur together with mood disorders such as depression. Anxiety disorders also can involve sleep problems. Sleeping at least 7 hours nightly and getting help for a sleep problem can improve your mood and emotional health.

KEY POINTS:

- **Adults should sleep 7 or more hours per night on a regular basis to promote optimal health.**
- **Insomnia often occurs along with depression and anxiety.**
- **Untreated sleep disorders such as obstructive sleep apnea can impair your mood.**
- **Cognitive behavioral therapy and other treatments can improve both your sleep and mood.**



How Can I Learn More?

- Talk to your board-certified sleep medicine physician.
- Visit www.sleepeducation.org

Am I At Risk:

Adults who sleep less than 7 hours nightly have a higher risk of mood problems. Sleep disorders that disrupt your sleep also can have a negative impact on your mood. Insomnia, depression and anxiety share many common risk factors. These include:

- » Traumatic or stressful events
- » Medical problems, such as cancer or chronic pain
- » Side-effects of certain medications
- » Major life changes
- » Drug or alcohol use

GENERAL OVERVIEW:

Sleep is important for your mood and emotional health. Sleeping less than 7 hours nightly increases your risk of depression and other mood disorders. Depression involves a sad mood that interferes with your daily functioning. Ongoing sleep loss also increases your risk of having suicidal thoughts. Anxiety involves worries or fears that have a negative impact on your daily life. Insomnia can cause depression and anxiety, and depression and anxiety can cause insomnia.

By disrupting your sleep, an untreated sleep disorder also can disturb your mood. Common sleep disorders that can increase your risk of depression include obstructive sleep apnea and shift work disorder. People with restless legs syndrome have a higher risk of depression and anxiety. Nightmares, insomnia, depression and anxiety are all common in people who have post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

TREATMENT:

Cognitive behavioral therapy for insomnia (CBT-I) is the most effective, long-term treatment for chronic insomnia. CBT-I teaches you to change negative thoughts and attitudes about sleep. You also develop relaxation skills and learn how to change behaviors that interfere with sleep. By reducing insomnia symptoms, CBT-I also can improve your mood.

Sleeping pills are a short-term treatment option for insomnia. Like all medications, these drugs can cause a variety of side-effects. You should take a sleeping pill only when supervised by a doctor. Some pills are used to treat both insomnia and either depression or anxiety.

Treating insomnia, depression or anxiety also may involve treating an underlying medical problem, such as chronic pain. Changing medications also may improve your sleep and mood.

Bright light therapy is a treatment option for some circadian rhythm sleep-wake disorders. Light therapy also can provide a boost to your mood.

TIPS:

- **Sleep is one of the three pillars of a healthy lifestyle, along with diet and exercise.** To improve your mood, you should sleep 7 or more hours per night.
- **You also should get regular exercise.** Do aerobic activities like walking, swimming or jogging. Do other activities to strengthen your muscles. Regular exercise improves sleep.
- **Daylight helps set the timing of your body clock.** It also provides a natural mood boost. Take a morning walk or go outside at lunchtime to enjoy the sunlight. When you are inside during the day, try to spend some time sitting by a window.

➔ Next Steps:

- Make it a priority to sleep 7 or more hours nightly, eat a healthy diet and exercise regularly.
- Go outside in the morning or at lunchtime to enjoy some daylight.
- Ask your doctor if your sleep problems may be having a negative impact on your mood.
- Your doctor may schedule you for a sleep study if you have symptoms of a sleep disorder such as sleep apnea.
- Talk to your doctor about any ongoing sleep problems.
- If you are having suicidal thoughts, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

Questions For Your Physician



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

Sample Questions:



Why do I feel tired all the time?

Why do I wake up so early in the morning?