



Childhood Insomnia



Childhood insomnia is difficulty initiating and/or maintaining sleep or early morning awakenings. Types of insomnia include:

- Acute insomnia — Sleep issues lasting less than three months
- Chronic insomnia— Sleep issues lasting more than three months
- Transient insomnia — Short-term; typically lasting less than one week

What causes childhood insomnia?

Childhood insomnia, or difficulty falling or staying asleep, can be caused by various factors, such as:

- Stress and anxiety
- Sleep environment
- Screen time
- Irregular sleep schedule
- Underlying medical conditions
- Mental health disorders
- Poor lifestyle choices
- Certain medications
- Caffeine

What are the symptoms?

- Excessive worrying about difficulty sleeping at night
- Trying too hard to fall asleep
- A decrease in daytime functioning
- Behavioral changes, including irritability and a decline in school performance
- Daytime fatigue
- Excessive caffeine use



How can I help my child?

- Ask your doctor to refer your child to a sleep specialist who can help you further
- Make sure you follow a healthy sleep practice, called “sleep hygiene”

Sleep Hygiene

- Have a set bedtime and wake time
- Keep a consistent sleep schedule
- Avoid electronics at bedtime
- Establish a bedtime routine
- Avoid caffeine
- Create a good sleep environment
- Avoid naps for children over 5 years old

Diagnosis and Treatment

- Your sleep specialist will schedule an initial clinic visit to learn details about your child’s sleep issues
- Depending on the evaluation, your sleep specialist may:
 - Ask you to fill out a sleep diary
 - Order a sleep study or polysomnography if an underlying sleep disorder is suspected
 - Prescribe medications

Resources

<https://aasm.org/clinical-resources/patient-info/>
<https://sleepeducation.org/patients/>
<https://sleepeducation.org/healthy-sleep/>
<https://sleepeducation.org/sleep-disorders/>



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