Insomnia

Insomnia means you have trouble falling or staying asleep. **It affects about one person in three at different times and is usually related to stress from work, school, or personal relations**. Insomnia is also a sign of depression or anxiety. Other medical problems that cause insomnia include conditions that cause pain, night leg cramps, coughing, shortness of breath, urinary problems, and fevers. Sleep apnea is an abnormal breathing pattern at night that can cause insomnia and loud snoring. Certain medications and excess intake of caffeine drinks (coffee, tea, colas) can also interfere with normal sleep.

Treatment for insomnia depends on the cause. Besides specific medical treatment, the following measures can help you relax and get better sleep. Get regular exercise every day, at least several hours before bed time. Try to get to bed at the same time every night. Take a hot bath before retiring to help you relax. Do not stay in bed if you are unable to sleep. During the daytime avoid staying in bed to watch television, eat, or read. Reduce unwanted noise and light in your room. Keep your room at a comfortable temperature.

Avoid alcohol as it causes one to sleep less soundly, may cause you to awaken during the night, and can leave you feeling groggy the next day. Using a mild sedative prescribed or suggested by your caregiver may be needed, but the daily use of sleeping pills is not recommended. **Anti-depressant medicines can improve sleep in people with depression**. Please call your doctor for follow up care to better understand the cause and proper treatment of your insomnia.

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