

Health Awareness

Tips To Help Women Get A Better Night's Sleep

(NAPSA)—Women are often faced with balancing the demands of work, family and household responsibilities, which can interfere with getting a good night's sleep. It's no wonder that sleep problems affect more women than men. When women do sleep, it tends to be light and easily disturbed. In fact, according to the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, insomnia affects about 40 percent of women compared to only 30 percent of men.

Insomnia is characterized by difficulty falling asleep, difficulty staying asleep, poor sleep quality and impairment of next-day function. Symptoms include waking up feeling tired or not well rested, feeling tired during the day, having trouble focusing on tasks and feeling anxious, depressed or irritable.

Women and Sleep

Many factors can influence the quality of women's sleep, which may change over time. Common factors affecting sleep include:

Lifestyle

- Life events (e.g., loss of a loved one, financial concerns)
- Poor sleep hygiene (sleep hygiene involves practices that are necessary to have normal, quality nighttime sleep and full daytime alertness)

Stress

Health

- Medical problems (e.g., acid reflux and asthma)
- Medication use (e.g., antidepressants, antiepileptics, CNS stimulants)
- Pain conditions (migraine, tension headaches and arthritis conditions are more common among women)

Research shows that poor sleep and sleep-related problems are



Speaking with your healthcare provider about prescription insomnia medications can be an important step in finding an appropriate insomnia treatment.

more strongly associated with poor health outcomes in women than in men. Not getting enough sleep may cause:

- Increased accidents
- Increased risk of diabetes, hypertension and cardiovascular disease

- Poor job performance
- Trouble concentrating
- Weight gain

It's important to note that prescription insomnia treatments have not been shown to impact these consequences.

Getting Help

Many treatment options are available for insomnia. In fact, nearly \$15 billion is spent each year on healthcare related to sleep problems. Non-prescription treatment options include practicing good sleep hygiene (see adjacent SLEEP Tips), over-the-counter therapies, natural remedies and behavioral therapy. Prescription insomnia medications are available as well, including benzodiazepines (BZRAs), non-BZRA sedative-hypnotics and melatonin receptor agonists. Each type of medication works differently in the

body. For instance, melatonin receptor agonists, the newest class of prescription drugs for sleep-related problems, work with the body's normal sleep-wake cycle to initiate sleep, while BZRAs and non-BZRAs work with GABA receptors in the brain.

Your healthcare provider can help further explain the differences between treatment options and answer questions.

For more information about insomnia or appropriate treatment options, please speak to your healthcare provider.

SLEEP Tips

Not sleeping well? Here are some tips on how to have a more relaxed and comfortable night's sleep:

- **Stick to a sleep schedule.** Going to bed and waking up around the same time each day will help reinforce the body's sleep-wake cycle and can help you fall asleep better at night.
- **Lifestyle change.** Avoid alcohol and foods/drinks high in caffeine close to bedtime; and schedule workouts at least a few hours before bedtime.
- **Establish a relaxing bedtime routine,** which can include having a cup of tea, taking a bath or pampering yourself for a good night's sleep.
- **Environment is key.** Create a sleep environment that is cool, quiet, dark and comfortable.
- **Prioritize your day.** Avoid bringing responsibilities into bed and associate the bed with sleep only! It's not a good idea to watch TV, listen to the radio or read in bed.