

Sleep Disorders Center

Norwalk Hospital's Sleep Disorders Center is the only sleep center in Fairfield County with a department dedicated to the treatment of insomnia.

More than 20 million Americans experience chronic insomnia, which is insomnia that lasts longer than a month. If left untreated, insomnia can affect your nightly sleep and daily functioning. Without quality, restful sleep, you may feel tired and irritable during the day and may struggle with your memory, concentration and focus.

But you don't need to suffer any more sleepless nights—there is help! The Sleep Disorders Center's team of sleep medicine experts are trained in behavioral sleep medicine. They can help you address the causes of your insomnia so you can get the rest you need.

Make an Appointment

No physician referral is required. To make an appointment, please call the Sleep Disorders Center at **(203) 855+3632**.



Sleep Disorders Center Insomnia



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What is insomnia?

Insomnia is a persistent sleep disorder characterized by:

- Difficulty falling asleep
- Difficulty staying asleep
- Early morning awakening
- Any combination of the above

What causes insomnia?

Common causes of insomnia include:

- Stress
- Mood disorders, such as depression or anxiety
- Stimulants, such as caffeine, nicotine and some medications for weight loss, allergies, asthma and colds
- Alcohol, which can disrupt your sleep and cause you to wake up briefly throughout the night
- Work hours, such as those worked by shift workers
- An irregular sleep schedule, in which you don't consistently go to bed or wake up at the same time every day
- Heartburn or acid reflux
- Environmental disruptions, such as noise or light

When should I seek help?

It may be time to seek help if you have been struggling with sleep for more than a month, and your lack of sleep is interfering with how you feel or function during the day.

How is insomnia treated?

At Norwalk Hospital's Sleep Disorders Center, we treat insomnia in multiple ways with an emphasis on behavioral treatments. Treatment options may include:

- **Cognitive therapy:** Many people have mistaken beliefs and attitudes about sleep, including that all people need eight hours of sleep per night to feel rested. Cognitive therapy uses reasoning methods to correct these faulty ideas and thoughts. This helps promote sleep and relieve daytime worrying and nighttime wakefulness.
- **Sleep restriction therapy:** Even though they are unable to sleep, insomniacs may stay in bed, hoping this will result in more sleep time. Instead, too much time in bed spreads sleep over a longer period, breaks up sleep, and increases frustration. Sleep restriction therapy (SRT) limits the time spent in bed, thereby improving sleep efficiency.
- **Sleep hygiene:** Developing good sleep habits can help you sleep better. These include eating dinner at least three hours before bedtime; avoiding strenuous exercise within six hours of bedtime; unwinding from your day; not watching the clock after you've gone to bed; and maintaining a cool, dark and quiet sleep environment.

- **Exercise:** Regular exercise helps you sleep better.
- **Relaxation therapy:** Learning how to relax can help you manage your stress during the day and fall asleep at night.
- **Neurofeedback:** This cutting-edge biofeedback program can help promote sleep.
- **Stimulus control:** This involves reducing wake-related activities in the bedroom, including lying awake in bed. To improve the chances of falling asleep:
 - Go to bed only when you feel drowsy.
 - If you are not drowsy or are unable to fall asleep after 20 to 25 minutes, leave your bedroom and do a quiet activity somewhere else. Only return to bed when drowsy; repeat this process as needed.
 - Get up at the same time every day, including weekends.
 - Use your bedroom only for sleep, illness and sex.
 - Avoid napping during the day. If you must nap, limit it to 30 minutes and don't nap after 3:00 p.m.
- **Medications:** Sleep medications may be prescribed as needed. Patients taking medication will be tapered off the medication before they are discharged from the treatment program.

