

Medication is not a good choice for long-term sleep problems. It can have serious side effects, increase the likelihood of having a fall or car accident, and reduce the quality of your sleep.

Sleep medication supplied in hospital generally should not be continued after leaving hospital.

It's **time to talk** to your doctor if you:

- have been taking sleep medication
- would consider taking less sleep medication
- would like to try a non-drug approach to help you sleep.

Non-drug treatments work for about 70% of people who try them and are far more effective in the long term than sleep medication.

Stopping sleep medication needs to be done gradually. Always talk to your doctor or pharmacist first.

Never share your medication.

Veterans' MATES

www.dva.gov.au/health/veteransmates

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The Good Sleep Guide

Get the best from your medicines



✓ day

Not being able to sleep is a common problem. It can cause worry and lead to more sleep problems.

Often our day and evening routines, and our beliefs about sleep, determine how well we sleep.

Here is what the experts say...

During the **day**

- ✓ Get up at the same time each day.
- ✓ Establish daily routines for meals, activities, taking medicines.
- ✓ Try to spend at least 30 minutes outdoors each day to help set your body clock.
- ✓ Avoid daytime naps particularly after 3pm.
- ✓ Try to be more active during the day.

Did you know?

- People with sleep problems often get more sleep than they think.
- We generally need less sleep now than we did when we were younger.
- Worrying about a bad night's sleep affects us more the next day than the lack of sleep.

✓ evening

During the **evening**

- ✓ Do not sleep or doze in the armchair. Keep sleep for bedtime.
- ✓ Allow yourself time to wind down during the evening.
- ✓ If you find yourself worrying, put your day to rest by writing down a list of your concerns. Decide to deal with them tomorrow.
- ✓ Avoid caffeine, smoking and alcohol near bedtime. They interfere with either getting to sleep or staying asleep.
- ✓ Make sure your bed and bedroom are comfortable - not too cold or too warm. Reduce light and noise.
- ✓ Avoid a heavy meal close to bedtime. If you are hungry, a snack may help you sleep.

✓ bedtime

At **bedtime**

- ✓ Have a bedtime routine so your body knows you are preparing for sleep. Try a warm shower, a snack or listening to relaxing music.
- ✓ Go to bed only when you are sleepy.
- ✓ Don't watch TV or use a computer in bed. Only read in bed if it helps you fall asleep.
- ✓ Enjoy relaxing even if you do not at first fall asleep.
- ✓ Sleep problems are not as damaging as you might think. Getting frustrated or worried about not being able to sleep makes it harder to fall asleep.
- ✓ If you are still awake after about 20 minutes, get up and do something relaxing. Go back to bed when you feel sleepy.
- ✓ Speak to your doctor if you are frequently getting up at night to go to the toilet.